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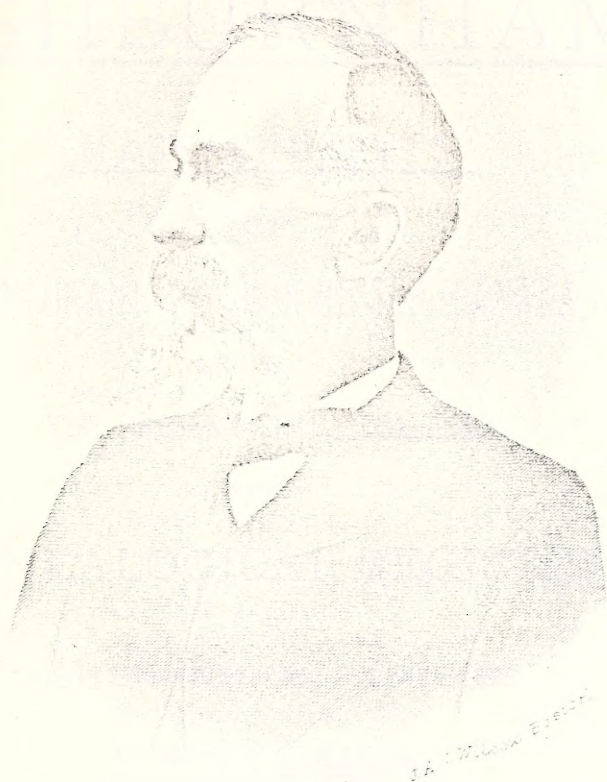
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HISTORY

ASHLEIGHHAM



Ezra S. Stearns.



HISTORY  
OF  
ASHBURNHAM

MASSACHUSETTS

FROM

THE GRANT OF DORCHESTER CANADA

TO

THE PRESENT TIME, 1734-1886

WITH A

GENEALOGICAL REGISTER

OF

ASHBURNHAM FAMILIES

BY EZRA S. STEARNS.

*Author of the History of Rindge, N. H.*

V. I

"Whatever strengthens our local attachments is favorable both to individual and national character. Show me a man who cares no more for one place than another, and I will show you in that same person one who loves nothing but himself."

ASHBURNHAM, MASS.:  
PUBLISHED BY THE TOWN.  
1887.



## PREFATORY NOTE

BY THE

## COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION.

THIS volume is presented in response to a popular demand. The enterprise was instituted and sustained by a generous desire of the citizens of Ashburnham to secure the publication of the history of the town. The initial action to this end is found in a vote of the town in 1880, making choice of Wilbur F. Whitney, Rev. Josiah D. Crosby, Simeon Merritt and William P. Ellis to make preliminary arrangements for the compilation and publication of a volume. By subsequent votes of the town the committee has been directed to consummate the work.

In 1882 Mr. Merritt died, and George F. Stevens was elected by the town to complete the original number of the committee. Subsequently, on account of age and feeble health, Mr. Crosby resigned, and Charles Winchester was designated to fill the vacancy. Mr. Ellis was appointed by the committee to gather material and family registers, and from this point the work has been prosecuted without interruption.

Early in the spring of 1884 the committee contracted with Hon. Ezra S. Stearns, of Rindge, New Hampshire, to write a History of Ashburnham, following a general plan which he submitted for our consideration, and which met our approbation.

Mr. Stearns has faithfully and ably fulfilled the obligation he assumed, and has produced a work which meets our warmest approval and unqualified endorsement. Yielding to the express desire of the author, we reluctantly refrain from a more particular expression of our estimate of the sterling character of the volume and of our ready appreciation of the vigor of thought and felicity of expression which will not escape the attention of the reader.

WILBUR F. WHITNEY,  
WILLIAM P. ELLIS,  
GEORGE F. STEVENS,  
CHARLES WINCHESTER.



## P R E F A C E .

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A NEW ENGLAND town can allege no antiquity. Only in a comparative sense can one assume the dignity of age. The municipal history of Ashburnham is compressed within the brief span of one hundred and fifty years, and of this period the first two decades are isolated from the connected narrative of the remainder. The drama is limited in duration, yet the scenes are crowded with events. At the threshold stands the surveyor with his compass and chain, the emblems of approaching civilization, ready to sever from the wilderness a defined area and limit the stage on which will appear the shifting scenes of succeeding years. The early settler, struggling with the subjugation of the forest, and, in the dying flame and fading smoke of the clearing, rearing a cabin and garnering the product of a virgin soil, the mechanic in daily toil dreaming not that he is founding industries that will become swelling tributaries to the commerce of the world, the Revolutionary soldier breathing into life his aspirations of liberty, and in the fruits of war revealing the possibility of a republican form of government, the meeting-house on the hill, the settlement and labor of "the learned orthodox minister," the early schools, the primitive roads broadening by use into thoroughfares, the rude mills exhibiting only the elements of mechanical skill,



are a part of the history of every New England town, and each occupies a place in the following chapters. And yet throughout the work, in early and in later affairs, it has been my constant aim to present, in a proper light, the forms of procedure and the phases of character peculiar to this town. The stereotyped features, which in the force and sequence of events are common to the history of all New England towns, have been mainly employed as connecting links in the succession of events or as mirrors to the individuality of Ashburnham. The glory of any town is reflected in the lives of sterling men whose deeds are the soul of its annals. In the following chapters, generation has succeeded generation, and each has left to posterity the strengthening influence of an inspiring example. In local history is found the most potent incentive to activity of life and an honorable conduct. The nearness and familiarity of the exemplars animate the example.

During a review of these many years I have found entertainment, which can be renewed by the reader, in silently noting the types of mind and character developed by the several families which have constituted the population of the town, — each generation exhibiting the balances between extremes of character and ability that incite comparisons and suggest conclusions. The summary record of achievement and conduct demonstrates that the genius of Ashburnham has been persevering, that the average ability of the citizen has been conspicuous, and the general character of the masses has been well sustained.

Without an interruption of the narrative in an exhibition of the fact, it has been my purpose to supplement the deeds of men with an effort to also portray the habit and thought, the manners and customs, the aspirations and passions of



each generation, and to state facts in such a manner that the reader be left at full liberty to draw suggested conclusions. Leaving the discussion of philosophies to more pretentious volumes, it has remained our pleasurable labor to revive fading memories, to give form and substance to the shadows of the past, to clothe in the habiliments of truth the fugitive forms of tradition, to assign to deeds of men the inspiration of a good or an unworthy motive, to present a picture of the past in which can be seen in clearer light the outlines of the present, and to combine the past with the present in a connected narrative of sequence and fact. Not to the manner born nor at any time a resident of Ashburnham, I have often gleaned in the field at a disadvantage, but I have been free from the prejudices of familiarity, and in this effort have not been misguided by the vivid impressions and false estimates of childhood and youth.

The fields, from which the material of the following chapters has been garnered, are the town and church records, the manuscript volumes in the State archives, manuscripts and printed volumes wherever found, and registry and probate records of several counties. Cemeteries with their rigid inscriptions and family records, preserved by pious care, have supplied many dates that could not be secured from other sources. To the custodians of the numerous records that have been laid under tribute, and to a multitude of friends who have rendered cheerful and valued assistance, my weighty obligations are revived in the memory of polite attention and spontaneous kindness. A generous measure of genealogical information has been obtained at the library of the New England Historic-Genealogical Society, and to John Ward Dean, A. M., and



his obliging assistants, I am indebted beyond the conventional forms of acknowledgment. And duty joins with pleasure in an unreserved expression of my gratitude to Harriet Proctor Poore, whose familiarity with the repositories of historic and genealogical lore has aided successful research for many dates and facts not easily accessible. To Wilbur F. Whitney, William P. Ellis, George F. Stevens and Charles Winchester, who have faithfully represented the town in the preparation and publication of this volume, I am pleased to express personal obligations for courteous treatment and polite attention. Their zeal and interest in the prosecution of the work have been a constant incentive, and their prompt attention in the proffer of facilities has anticipated every reasonable requirement. The committee has relieved me from the embarrassment of censorship and the restraint of dictation, and, in a proper recognition of the fact, I assume responsibility for errors, for failure of judgment and for all imperfections which appear in the following pages.

It should be borne in mind that many of the following chapters were written two years ago, and that mention of present time has reference to the beginning of the year 1886. The mention of a subsequent event and the employment of a later date are gratuitous amendments to the plan originally adopted.

EZRA S. STEARNS.

RINDGE, N. H., *May 1, 1887.*



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# INTRODUCTION.

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SCENERY.

ASHBURNHAM is the most eastern of the three towns in Worcester county in Massachusetts bordering upon New Hampshire and is bounded on the north by Rindge and New Ipswich; on the east by Ashby and Fitchburg; on the south by Westminster and Gardner and on the west by Winchendon. The old common on Meeting-house hill is fifty-five miles in right line northwest from Boston, and thirty-one miles north from Worcester, and is in latitude  $42^{\circ} 38'$  north, and longitude  $4^{\circ} 10'$ , very nearly, east from Washington. The area of the town is about twenty-four thousand five hundred acres including about one thousand five hundred acres of water. The surface is hilly and diversified. Without ranges or systems of hills the outlines of the landscape are bold and majestic, and promontories are frequent, yet isolated. Many of the elevations are bold and rugged, while others are rounded and elevated swells of land fertile to the summit. There is very little plain and intervale. The streams are gathered in broken and narrow valleys.



The soil of Ashburnham is that common to the hill towns in this vicinity. When placed in comparison it is even stubborn and rocky, yet in most parts arable and productive. The surface is well watered. The subsoil is clay retaining moisture and springs of the purest water are abundant.

The altitude of this town is greater than that of the surrounding country on the east, south and west. The courses of the streams are outward except in the north. The line of water-shed between the Connecticut and Merrimack valleys extends diagonally through the town. The line of division is irregular but is easily traced from Great Watatic to Little Watatic, thence southerly and over the low ridges between Upper Naukeag and Rice pond to the old common. Diverging to the north and west the line extends near the ancient Winchendon road past the residence of Edwin Hayward to near the John Woods farm, thence southerly into the forest about one mile and thence westerly and southwesterly about two miles to the southeast corner of Winchendon.

The northwestern or Connecticut slope is drained into Miller's river. The Upper Naukeag lake which flows into Lower Naukeag is the source of the south branch of that river. At the Lower Naukeag it receives a copious affluent from the northeast. This stream rises in Binney pond in New Ipswich and receives the drainage of a considerable portion of the eastern slope of New Ipswich mountains. It enters this town through the farm of Edwin J. Stearns and flows thence through the village of North Ashburnham into the Lower Naukeag. In its onward course from this lake the next considerable tributary to the south branch of Miller's river is the modest contribution of Rindge which flows past the mills of Robert W. McIntire and joins the stream north of Burrageville. The river thus reinforced abruptly leaves the town but repenting before a mile is traversed, it returns and patiently drives the



mills at Burrageville. In compensation for exhausted energy it soon receives a tributary from the south and rushes on to its many tasks below until it falls into the Connecticut near Greenfield. By this river a half of the town is drained. The source of the brook rising in New Ipswich and flowing through this town is the extreme eastern point of the Connecticut valley.

The southeastern or Merrimack slope is divided into four sections and is drained by as many streams flowing outward. The first drainage is in the northeast part of the town and embraces the basin defined by Great Watatic, Little Watatic and Blood hill. Here the overflow of Stoger meadow and a few smaller streams falling into Ward pond and thence into Watatic pond give rise to a branch of the Souhegan river. Its course is through the north part of Ashby and New Ipswich and onward to the Merrimack river at the town of Merrimack, New Hampshire.

The second drainage is of small area lying between Blood and Russell hills and embraces portions of the Dutch and Cambridge farms. The streams leave this town near the residence of Joseph W. Wilker and fall into the Ashby reservoir. Here the collected water assumes the name of Willard's brook and is tributary to the Squanicook river in Townsend.

The third drainage is bounded on the north and east by the Connecticut slope and the first and second sections of the Merrimack slope. The western boundary is the height of land from Meeting-house hill, thence south across the farm of Joseph Harris to the line of Westminster. The water collected at Rice or Reservoir pond is drained by Phillips' brook flowing through the centre village and onward through the northeast part of Westminster into Fitchburg.

The fourth drainage of the Merrimack slope embraces the



southwest and remaining area of the town. Here are several artificial ponds but no natural body of water. The drainage is collected in the stream rising in the Nashua reservoir and flowing through the village of South Ashburnham and thence through Westminster in a course nearly parallel with Phillips' brook to the line of Fitchburg. At this point it abruptly turns to the north and unites with Phillips' brook at West Fitchburg. Dashing on in a first embrace through the rocky valley of Fitchburg it more leisurely pursues its way through Leominster and Lancaster to a point between Groton and Shirley where it receives the Squanicook, bearing the waters of the second drainage. Together the triune river engulphed in stronger currents falls into the Merrimack river at Nashua. Perhaps somewhere in the river-bed they recognize and mingle with the clear waters from Watatic pond which in its onward course to the ocean has wandered through the valley of the Souhegan. Fallulah or Baker's brook flowing into Fitchburg and a small stream flowing into Westminster are tributary in a short distance to the larger streams and are not considered separately.

There are eight natural ponds in this town; four are tributary to the Connecticut and four to the Merrimack river.

THE UPPER NAUKEAG or Meeting-house pond, beneath the towering summits of the surrounding hills and dotted with rugged islands, is a lake of peculiar beauty and attraction. The water is clear and cool and the basin unusually free from sediment. The shores are mainly rocky, sometimes bold and rugged, in other places pure sand of sparkling whiteness forms the encircling barrier and extends beneath the surface of the crystal water, but nowhere is the lake approached by low and marshy ground. This lake and the Watatic mountains were known to the explorers before the settlement of the town. The names undoubtedly are



of Indian origin, but the original sound has been so imperfectly preserved and the names have experienced so many changes in English orthography that students of the Indian dialects fail to discover the original signification of the terms. Professor Trumbull, a recognized authority, has examined these names in every form of orthography and fails to find in them any element that designates either pond or mountain.

THE LOWER NAUKEAG LAKE is less rugged in outline. At the eastern extremity the accumulating deposit of centuries has appeared above the surface of the water and many acres of low land are included within the original basin of the lake. The drainage is controlled by artificial obstruction.

A NAMELESS POND of small area is found in the forest and surrounded by marsh. It is situated a short distance west of Little Watatic and is tributary to the stream which flows through North Ashburnham.

ANOTHER NAMELESS POND, a lonely sheet of water, is found in the marsh in the southwest part of the town. It is near the line of the Cheshire railroad and midway between the depots at North and South Ashburnham. It is tributary to the south branch of Miller's river at Burrageville. The course of the stream is northwest and near the line of the Cheshire railroad.

RICE POND is the most important body of water in the Merrimack drainage. The dam at the outlet controls the natural current and overflows the original boundaries. The declivity of the shores is generally uniform and the natural features and contour of the pond are generally preserved. At the present time it is frequently called Reservoir pond, and in 1735 it was known as Wenecheag pond.

MUD POND of small area is tributary to Rice pond and is situated about one-half mile northwest of it.



WARD POND, formerly known as Whiteman pond, is a gem among the lakes guarded and nurtured by the encircling hills. Its pebbly shores are familiar to the angler while its placid surface and picturesque surroundings are suggestive of rest and tranquillity.

WATATIC POND on the stream below Ward pond is similar in outline but smaller in area. It lies partly in Ashby, but the greater portion is in this town. Near these two ponds were the homes of several of the earliest settlers of Dorchester Canada.

In addition to these natural bodies of water, which for centuries have enlivened the landscape and mirrored in their crystal waters each passing bird and the overhanging hills, there are many reservoirs or artificial ponds in this town. Maintained by the work and for the convenience of man they are perishable and unless the barriers are constantly renewed the waters will again flow within the banks of the natural currents. They form no part of the natural features of the town.

The prevailing arboral products are white pine, spruce, hemlock, maple, birch and beech. These are found in all parts of the town. In the original forests the heaviest growth of the deciduous varieties was found in the southeast part of the town, while the soft woods were in greater abundance in the northern and western portions of the town. The red oak, chestnut, white and black ash, hard pine, juniper or tamarack, fir balsam, basswood, leverwood and hornbeam are native here. The elm, black cherry and white oak are found in small quantity. The white willow, poplar and gray birch are possibly of secondary growth and are constantly increasing in quantity. The moosewood, with its large, broad leaves, flourishes beneath the shade of the forests. Black alder, bearing red berries, is seen upon the roadside, and tag alder



lines the shore of the brooks and the margin of low lands. Red and poison sumac, or dogwood, are rare. Clusters of withe, whitewood, witch and nut hazel, and laurel are found in many places. A few locust — two varieties — butternut or white walnut, and Lombardy poplar have flourished as shade-trees, but are not natives here.

The town originally was heavily wooded. The denizens of the dense forests included a variety of animals common to the locality. In the early progress of the settlement the black bear forsook his favorite haunts without thought of contest or show of resistance. A coward both by instinct and habit he fled at the approach of man. But every solitary bear that since has made a hasty circuit of the town has lived in perennial tradition and has immortalized every man or woman who chanced to behold the fugitive presence. Very few of the early settlers ever beheld the countenance of a living bear. Habitually his face was directed the other way and his eye was ever resting on some distant point he desired to visit. The wolf in early times was more numerous and troublesome. Fifty years ago they had not entirely disappeared.

Traces of beaver dams are not yet wholly obliterated but the builders abruptly refused to labor in competition with man. The track of the otter is yet seen occasionally in the new fallen snow and the mink still inhabits along the courses of the streams. Muskrats with little fear of man continue to build their round moundlike houses in the shallow water of the ponds. Foxes, fed by the garbage of civilization, and the woodchuck, partial to the succulent vegetation of cultivated fields, are probably as numerous as at any former period. The several varieties of squirrels, the hare and the coney rabbit, while limited in the area of their possessions, are relatively numerous. Occasionally the sleepy porcupine is found in his quiet home in a hollow tree and the raccoon visits



the fields of ripening corn from year to year in unequal numbers.

The birds found here are such as are common to the latitude, and other conditions of the town. The melodies that greeted the morning light in the solitudes of the original forests are our delight at the present time. The thrush and the sparrow, first to confide in the mercy of men and nest near the hamlets of the clearing, if not as numerous as formerly, are still the welcome visitors of the summer-time. The red-headed woodpecker, whose animated rappings broke the stillness of the forest, was frequently seen in former years but is now extinct, while the imported sparrow has found its way hither from the seaboard. The wild goose, the black and gray duck, of migratory habits, visit the ponds in their spring and autumn transits. The wood and dipper duck not unfrequently nest here, and can be found in their retreats during the summer and autumn. The loon or northern diver (*Colymbus glacialis*) during the summer months and early autumn is daily seen floating upon the lakes or is heard calling his mate during a flight between the ponds. They frequently nest upon the islands in Upper Naukeag. The wild pigeon is less abundant than formerly, while the sonorous whistle of the quail (*Ortyx virginianus*) is sometimes heard, but this bird seldom nests in this latitude. Partridges (*Tetras umbellus*, or the *Bonasa umbellus* of Linnaeus) are abundant, and the loud whirring sound of their wings, as they burst away at the approach of visitors to their haunts, and their animated drumming in the forest continue to attest their familiar presence.

The lakes, reservoirs and rivulets of this town abound in fish peculiar to the waters of this vicinity. So far as known, none of the natives of these waters have become extinct. The black bass, land-locked salmon and lake trout are of recent and artificial introduction. The brook, or spotted



trout, fond of shade and cool water, have been disturbed in their favorite haunts by the removal of the forests, and are less numerous than formerly. The name and the characteristics of the habitants of the lakes and brooks of this town are familiar to all, yet the following list may be of interest at some future time :

The pickerel (*Esox reticulatus*) ; brook trout (*Salmo fontinalis*) ; perch (*Perca flavescens*) ; shiner (*Stilbe chrysolenas*) ; bream or sunfish (*Pomotis vulgaris*) ; chub or cheven (*Leuciscus chephalus*) ; black sucker (*Catostomus*) ; chub sucker, another of the same genus ; the minnow, or minum, a very small fish, and a specie of *Leuciscus* ; cat fish or horned pout (*Pimelodus catus*). The common eel (*Anguilla tenuirostris*), and the lamprey eel, a specie of the *Petromyzon*, although rare, are sometimes taken from the ponds.

The most prominent elevation is Great Watatic. Its rounded summit is one thousand eight hundred and forty-seven feet above tide water. This grand and lofty tower on the line of the water-shed, is symmetrical in its form and imposing in its presence, and with grim visage it overlooks the hamlets in the northeast part of the town. In a right line and a mile nearer the old common, is Little Watatic, of similar form and softened outlines. An earlier orthography of these mountains, was Wautatuck. Blood hill, south of Great Watatic, and on the line of Ashby, in the morning light, casts its fretted shadow over the lakes at its base and around its crest the rainbow appears in the lingering rain of an evening shower. Across the intervening valley at the south, is the plateau of Russell hill, once heavily wooded, and now the seat of productive farms. Jewell hill, near at hand, is a sturdy watch-tower on the limits of the town.

East of Rice pond, suddenly rises the bristling form of



Mount Hunger. If its name and sterility are suggestive of famine, its situation near the lake is a safeguard against thirst. And on the line of the water-shed, is Meeting-house hill, which commands an extensive view of the surrounding country. Here our fathers literally went up to worship, and early called it "a hill with a very fair prospect." Brown hill, and the ridges in the northwest part of the town, and other elevations, on which are houses and cultivated fields, would be styled mountains amid surroundings less grand and lofty.

The altitude of the town, and the bold and rugged outlines of the landscape, are the elements of scenery unsurpassed in beauty and grandeur. These features of nature are a living inspiration and enjoyment to all who inhabit here, and treasured among golden memories are the visions of matchless sublimity which delighted the childhood and youth of every absent son and daughter of Ashburnham.

"From such a scene, how many feelings spring!  
How many thoughts flash through the kindling mind!  
Delightful dreams have birth; — we almost seem  
Pass'd to another sphere, — and the glad heart  
Forgets that earth is still its transient home.  
This is a vision for the rest of life,  
An amaranthine tenant for the breast,  
A morning star for mem'ry, which, amid  
Life's fitful clouds, shall radiantly shine forth.  
When scenes less beautiful attract my gaze,  
I shall recall thy quiet loveliness."



## CHAPTER I.

### THE EARLY GRANTS.

SEVEN GRANTS OF LAND. — THE POLICY OF THE GENERAL COURT. — AN ERA OF GRANTS. — THE STARR GRANT. — OWNED BY GREEN, WILDER AND JOSLIN. — THE CAMBRIDGE GRANT. — THE FIRST SURVEY. — THE LEXINGTON GRANT. — SALE OF SAME TO THE GERMANS. — THE BLUEFIELD GRANT. — THE EARLY ROAD TO NORTHFIELD. — THE GRANT SOLD TO WILLIAM JONES AND EPHRAIM WETHERBEE. — THE CONVERSE GRANT. — SALE TO JOSEPH WILDER. — THE ROLFE GRANT. — SALE TO JOHN GREENWOOD. — THE DORCHESTER CANADA OR TOWNSHIP GRANT. — THE CANADA SOLDIERS. — FOUR TOWNS CHARTERED IN ONE ENACTMENT. — THE TOWNSHIP SURVEYED. — AREA. — PERSONAL NOTICES.

ROME was founded on seven hills. Ashburnham was founded on seven grants of land. To give some account of these several grants will be the province of this chapter. One hundred and fifty years ago, Massachusetts was rich in lands, but poor in treasure. The public treasury was continually overdrawn, and in place of money, the unappropriated lands became the currency of the province. Upon the wilderness, the Government made frequent and generous drafts in the payment of a great variety of claims and demands against the colony. At the time these seven grants of land were made, the prolonged controversy concerning the location of the province line between Massachusetts and New Hampshire was being vigorously prosecuted. It was clearly the accepted policy of Massachusetts to fortify her claim to a



large tract of the controverted territory by possession and occupancy, in the hope thereby of maintaining a claim to the domain after all diplomacy had failed. Thus stimulated, both by necessity and policy, the General Court made numerous grants of land in this immediate vicinity, with unmistakable alacrity. It was an era of benevolence. Perceiving the disposition of the Government, many, who could only make the smallest pretext of service rendered the colony by themselves or their ancestors, were found among the petitioners for land. Seldom were their requests denied, and even old claims, which had remained unanswered many years, were suddenly revived and rewarded with generous parcels of the public domain. While this spirit of liberality was rife and condescending, the territory within the ancient boundaries of this township was severed from the wilderness and bestowed in recognition of service rendered the colony.

Included within the limits of Dorchester Canada, were six earlier grants, which were located and surveyed before the bounds of the township had been established. They fell within, yet were independent of, the main grant, as will appear in the progress of our narrative. In regard to the relative dates of these grants, the traditions of the town are not in harmony with the facts, and Whitney's History of Worcester County, 1793, incorrectly asserts: "To the original grant were afterwards added Lexington farm of one thousand acres, Cambridge farm of one thousand acres more, and Rolfe's farm of six hundred acres, and another of about a thousand acres." Rev. Dr. Cushing, in his Half Century Sermon, 1818, repeats the error in nearly the same words: "To the original grant, four farms were annexed: Lexington Farm, Cambridge Farm each of 1000 acres, Rolfe's Farm of 7 or 800 acres, and another of 1000." But he nearly corrects the statement when he adds, that "these



farms were located west of Lunenburg and Townsend, and north of Westminster, before this town was granted." It will appear that there were six farms, or grants of land, and that all of them were conveyed and located previous to the grant of Dorchester Canada. In the survey and location of the township, these farms were included within its boundaries, but were not computed as a part of the thirty-six square miles that were conveyed in the grant of the township.

About 1650, Dr. Thomas Starr accompanied, as surgeon, one of the expeditions against the Pequots. This service is the earliest event of which we have any knowledge, that is immediately associated with the history of Ashburnham, and leads directly to the narrative of the first grant of land within this town.

I. THE STARR GRANT.—On account of this service of Dr. Thomas Starr, who died in Charlestown, 1654, his widow, four years later, petitioned for a grant of land, as appears in Court Records, 1658 :

Whereas Mr Thomas Starre deceased having left a desolat widdow and eight smale children was y<sup>e</sup> chirurgeon of one of y<sup>e</sup> companys y<sup>t</sup> went against y<sup>e</sup> Pequotts in Ans<sup>r</sup> to the Request of Severall Gentl<sup>n</sup> on y<sup>t</sup> behalfe.

The Court judgeth it meete to graunt fower hundred acres of Land to y<sup>e</sup> sayd widow & children & doe impower y<sup>e</sup> Tresurer and Capt. Norton to make sale or otherwise to dispose of the sayd as may best conduce to y<sup>e</sup> benefit of the widdow & children as they shall see meete.

It is certain that this grant was never located and that the desolate widow and eight small children did not receive any benefit from the kind intentions of the General Court. Seventy-five years later, the descendants of Dr. Starr revived the claim as set forth in Council Records. October 19, 1733 :



A Petition of Benjamin Starr for himself and the rest of the heirs & Descendants of the Widow of Thomas Starr late of Charlestown dec<sup>d</sup> showing that the General Court of the late Colony of the Massachusetts Bay in the year 1658 for Service done by the said Thomas Starr made a Grant of four hundred Acres of Land to his said widow & Children which has not yet been laid out and therefore praying that they may now be allowed to lay out four hundred Acres of the unappropriated Land of the province to satisfy the said Grant.

In the House of Representatives Read & Ordered that the prayer of the petition be granted and the petitioners are allowed and empowered by a Surveyor & Chainmen on Oath to Survey and lay out four hundred Acres of the unappropriated Lands of the province so as not to prejudice the Settlement of a Township & that they return a Plat thereof to this Court within twelve Months for confirmation.

In Council Read & Concurred,.

Consented to

J. BELCHER.

Again the petitioners suffered their grant to lapse, and, in November, 1734, the General Court with expansive consideration "ordered that twelve months more be allowed to Benjamin Star of New London and other heirs to take and return a plat of land."

Under the provisions of this vote the grant was consummated and the service of Dr. Starr, after the lapse of nearly a century, was rewarded. The survey was made by Joseph Wilder and returned under date of May 30, 1735.

The chainmen in this survey were John Bennett and Joseph Wheelock. In the mean time the Cambridge farm and the Lexington farm, which were granted in 1734, had been surveyed and confirmed, and the Starr farm, although first granted, became the third in the order of survey. The confirmation or approval by the General Court is under date of June 10, 1735 :



A Plat of four hundred Acres of Land Granted to the heirs of the widow Starr laid out by Joseph Wilder Esqr, Surveyor and Chainmen on oath, lying on the north side of Narragansett Town number two and bounded every other way by Province Lands beginning at a stake & stones on the aforesaid Narragansett Line, Eighty rods west of where the said Line crosses a Branch of Lancaster North River that comes out of Wennecheag pond; thence running north 18 deg<sup>n</sup> west three hundred & thirty rods to a stake and stones; thence Running west 18 deg<sup>n</sup> South two hundred & Eight rods to a stake & stones; thence Running South 18 deg<sup>n</sup> East three hundred & thirty rods to the aforesaid Narragansett Line to a stake & stones; thence with said line East 18 deg<sup>n</sup> north two hundred & eight Rods to where it first began.

In the House of Representatives: Read & Ordered that the Plat be accepted and the Lands therein delineated & described be and hereby are confirmed to the said Benjamin Star and the other heirs and descendants of the widow of Dr. Thomas Star deceased their heirs and assigns Respectively provided the plat exceed not the quantity of four hundred Acres of Land and does not Interfere with any former Grant.

Consented to

J. BELCHER.

This tract of land can be easily traced at the present time. It lies on the line between Ashburnham and Westminster, its southeast corner being on the town line four hundred and fourteen rods westerly from the common corner of Ashburnham, Fitchburg and Westminster. It is a rectangle extending three hundred and thirty rods northerly and two hundred and eight rods westerly from the point named. Ten rods were added to the length and eight rods to the width on account of "uneven ground and swag of chain." The homestead of John G. Woodward lies within the grant.

Before the close of the year the heirs sold the grant to Thomas Green, a merchant of Boston, for two hundred



pounds, which then was about two hundred dollars in silver. Six years later Mr. Green sold the whole four hundred acres to Joseph Wilder, Jr., who continued the owner alone and in company with John Joslin until the time it was sold in small lots a number of years later. While Mr. Wilder had possession of this land he also owned the Converse grant which lies next west, and together they were known as the Wilder farm.

II. THE CAMBRIDGE GRANT. — For many years the General Court of the colony made it obligatory upon Cambridge, Newton and Lexington to maintain the bridge spanning Charles river between Brighton and Cambridge. This structure, called the "Great Bridge," was built in 1662 and was justly considered an achievement of considerable magnitude. These towns made frequent requests to be relieved, wholly or in part, from the burden of its support, and finally the three towns joined in a petition to the General Court praying that "they may be in some measure eased of it or that the Court would make them a Grant of Land the better to enable them to support said charge." The Court, apparently, was more inclined to give them land, than to offer or suggest any other relief, and with commendable promptness voted to each of the three towns one thousand acres of land. These grants were made June 22, 1734. Newton located five hundred and sixty-six acres adjoining Athol and Petersham and the remaining four hundred and thirty-four acres at Berwick, Maine. Cambridge and Lexington located their grants within the limits of this town, which for many years were familiarly known as Cambridge and Lexington farms. The Cambridge grant was surveyed previous to September 6, of the same year, for at that date Nathan Heywood made oath that in surveying this grant he had employed his best skill and understanding. The location and survey of the



grant were confirmed September 13, 1734. This grant was the first tract of land severed from the wilderness within the township of Ashburnham and was described in the records :

A Plat Containing one thousand acres of the unappropriated Land of the Province of the massachusetts Bay Laid out to satisfy a Grant made by the great and general court in their last sessions to the Town of Cambridge to enable them the better to keep in Repair their great Bridge over Charles River. Beginning at a certain Pillar of Stones erected for the North east Corner in the line of Lunenburg [ now Fitchburg ] about three or four score rods South from Northfield Road and running South 12 deg West on said line of Lunenburg one mile and a half and twenty pole with 17 pole allowance for swag of chain and uneven Land to a red oak tree marked. Then running West 12 deg North on unappropriated Land one mile with eleven pole allowance to a pillar of stones and a Little beech tree ; the other two lines being paralel with the same allowance and bounding on Common land.

Let it be remembered that in the survey of this grant, in the summer of 1734, Nathan Heywood of Lunenburg performed the first act within the township that is a part of the continuous history of this town. Previous events, more important in their results, occurred remote from the theatre of action. There are records of exploring parties through this town, and Great Watatic, Little Watatic, the Naukeag lakes, Stoger meadow and Souhegan river were associated names at an earlier date. This grant was the first tract of land severed from the unbounded wilderness. There is no record of any previous act performed on the soil that influenced succeeding events. The town of Cambridge owned this tract of one thousand acres about thirty years and during this time the records of that town contain frequent reference to "the Bridge farm in Dorchester Canada." In 1751 the bounds were



renewed by direction of the town, and in the succeeding years several committees were chosen with instruction to sell the land, provided reasonable terms could be secured. These measures for several years were void of any result. In November, 1764, "the town chose Deacon Samuel Whittemore, Thomas Sparhawk, Esq., Joseph Lee, Esq., Captain Ebenezer Stedman and Captain Thomas Adams to effect a sale" and gave them more peremptory instructions in regard to the business. No record of a sale has been found. There is, however, ample evidence that the town of Cambridge sold the land in several lots previous to 1770. In 1768, Captain Thomas Adams owned a portion of the farm and sold to his son John Adams one hundred acres of land "being a part of Cambridge Grant," and later he sold to Joshua Billings eighty acres adjoining. In 1772, the town of Cambridge enter on record an inventory of notes and money "being the proceeds of the sale of Cambridge farm." This record includes a note given by Isaac Stearns of Billerica for two hundred pounds, dated June 3, 1765; a note given by Samuel Russell of Cambridge for ninety-four pounds, six shillings and eight pence, dated August 4, 1769; and a note given by Antil Gallop of Cambridge for one hundred and thirty-three pounds, six shillings and eight pence, dated August 5, 1771.

No conveyance from the town of Cambridge or its committee is found on record, nor is it easy to discover in what manner Gallop and Russell disposed of their land. In regard to the land owned by Isaac Stearns the records in a more accommodating spirit announce that he sold seventy-five acres to Samuel Adams in 1769, and one hundred and forty acres in 1772 to Simeon Proctor and the same year two hundred and fifty acres to Ebenezer Fletcher. In all of these deeds the premises are described "as a part of the Bridge farm or Cambridge grant." It has been frequently



asserted and quite generally believed that this land was once the cherished property of Harvard University. An exhaustive search of the records of that institution not only fails to discover any proof of the allegation but finds ample evidence that the favorite tradition is unsupported and erroneous. In the succeeding chapters the families bearing the name of Adams, Russell, Billings and Fletcher, which have been introduced in these proceedings, will be found in continued occupancy of the premises.

III. THE LEXINGTON GRANT. — It already appears that this grant was simultaneous with the Cambridge grant, and for the same consideration. The survey was returned under date of September 18, and the grant was confirmed November 21, 1734. Ebenezer Prescott was surveyor and Ephraim Wetherbee and Isaac Townsend were chainmen. The report of the survey is here given :

At the Request of Capt. Boman and other Gentlemen of Lexington I have laid out pursuant unto a grant of 1000 acres for the support of Cambridge Bridge, at Stogers west of Little Wetatuck beginning 46 perches S 12 d. west from Lunenburg [now Fitchburg] Corner on South west side of Little Wetatuck to a heap of stones then running N. W. 29 d. N 320 perches as the chainmen [chainmen] say to a Hemlock with stones marked with L about 16 p \* \* off. then turning S. W. 29 W 500 perches to a Hemlock then turning S E 29 d S 320 perches to a rock with stones laid on it. Then Turning N. E. 29½ d. E 175 perches to the line of Cambridge's 1000 acres. Then turning North 10 perches by the line of said Cambridge corner and then turning by Cambridge Line 40 perches and then to the bounds first mentioned N E 29½ E. One perch allowance in 50 for swag of chain.

It will be seen that the northwest corner of Cambridge farm enters one side of this grant, cutting from it one and one-fourth acres. Accompanying the survey is a map defining the location of the brooks and of two meadows. Within



the outlines of the larger of these is written "Stogers medow," which clothes this name with considerable antiquity. On this map, Ward pond is represented a short distance north of the grant, but no name is applied to it. The brook flowing from it is styled Souhegen in one place and Sougan in another. The town of Lexington received no benefit from the grant for more than twenty years, when the town voted "to sell the Bridge farm, so called, that lies in Dorchester Canada, and choose William Reed, Ebenezer Fiske and John Stone to conduct the sale." In a deed dated December 31, 1757, the whole tract was sold to seven German emigrants for two hundred and eighty pounds, who, with others of the same nationality, immediately settled upon their new possessions. The origin of the name of Dutch farms is here easily discovered.

IV. THE BLUEFIELD GRANT.—This grant of four hundred and fifty acres was made to secure the maintenance of a house of entertainment upon the line of the Northfield road, which was laid out through this town previous to the charter of Dorchester Canada. This grant was located in the northwest part of the town, and upon both sides of that ancient road. In what manner the name of Bluefield became associated with this grant, is uncertain. The earliest records refer to the Bluefield farm and to the Bluefield road, but attentive research finds no explanation of this use of the word. Tradition, ever ready with suggestions, asserts, but without proof, that Mr. Bluefield lived here once upon a time, but the only indisputable thing that we can assert about Bluefield, is our complete ignorance concerning its origin. Happily, the history of the grant is less obscure than its name. To several prominent citizens of Lunenburg had been granted large tracts of land in the southwest part of New Hampshire, above Northfield. These gentlemen mani-



fested a lively interest in the construction and maintenance of the "great road from Lunenburg to Northfield and the new towns at Ashuelot." In the autumn of 1734, Benjamin Bellows, Hilkiah Boynton and Moses Willard joined in a petition for a grant of land to be located at some convenient point on the line of the road. The petition sets forth that the entire length of the road is forty-two miles, and that about twenty-four miles from Lunenburg there is a "house of entertainment set up to the great ease and comfort of persons travelling that road," and continues: "and your Petitioners apprehending it would greatly accomodate Travelers more especially in Winter seasons to have another House of Entertainment between Lunenburg and that already set up Humbly petition your Excellency and this Hon<sup>ble</sup> Court to make them a Grant of Land, in some suitable place if it be found on said Road, of four hundred and fifty acres of land." In answer to this petition, the General Court, November 28, 1734, granted four hundred and fifty acres on the line of the road and "near to Lexington Farm." It was stipulated in the grant that the survey should be made and returned within six months. The survey was not made until July 2, 1735, for the reasons set forth in another petition from the same gentlemen:

The Petition of Benjamin Bellows for himself Hilkiah Boynton and Moses Willard: —

Humbly Sheweth,

That on the 28th Day of November 1734 your Exelency and Honours were pleased to Grant your Petitioners four Hundred and fifty Acres of Land To be Layed out in a regular form on the new Road from Lunenburg to Northfield within six months from y<sup>e</sup> grant afores<sup>d</sup> On the Conditions mentioned and Expressed in the Grant and order of Court.

That your Petitioners Soon after the making of said Grant were about to Lay out the Land granted Accordingly; And upon the



said Road as then marked out viewed a Tract for that purpose but were told by Coll. Willard and others Concerned in Said Road That it would be necessary to alter the Same and if we Should Lay out the Land before the Road was Altered it might not answer the end proposed viz. the entertainment of Travailleurs &c. which occasioned Your Petitioners to Delay Laying out and Building on said Land Till the Time Given your Petitioners was Elapsed. Since Which Your Petitioners by the Advice and the Desire of Col<sup>l</sup> Willard and Others Chiefly concerned in said Road have Layed Out the Said Tract as Discribed in the plat herewith presented and built thereon a Good Dwelling House And furnished the Same for y<sup>e</sup> Entertainment of Travailleurs, Cleared a considerable Quantity of Land and Got Hay Sufficient for the Accomodation of all Travailleurs using Said Road and have Inhabited for more Than Six months Last past.

And Inasmuch as the only Reason of your Petitioners neglecting to Lay out and comply with the Conditions of said Grant was That the Good Ends proposed thereby might not be frustrated and Travailleurs y<sup>e</sup> better accomodated.

Therefore Your Petitioners Most Humbly pray your Exelency & Honours would be pleased to accept the said plat and Confirm the Land therein discribed To your petitioners their heirs & assigns forever. On Condition they perform upon the Same within Twelve months next coming All Things enjoyned them in the Conditions of y<sup>e</sup> Grant afores<sup>d</sup> they have omitted; The Time being Elapsed as afores<sup>d</sup> notwithstanding.

And Your Petitioners as bound in Duty shall ever pray.

BENJAMIN BELLOWS.

Tis hereby certified that what is Above Suggested Respecting the Turning the Road and the Petitioners building and Improving upon the Land is true.

JOSIAH WILLARD.

The date of this petition does not appear but it was written between July 2, 1735, the date of the survey, and January 17, 1736-7, when the General Court confirmed the grant.



With the original papers in the State archives on this subject is the report of David Farrar, the surveyor, in which it is stated that the grant is located on the Northfield road, partly on the fifteenth and partly on the sixteenth miles from Lunenburg, that it was laid out in the form of a rectangle two hundred and eighty-four by two hundred and seventy rods, with about one rod in thirty allowance for uneven ground; that the direction of the southern boundary is north  $70^{\circ}$  east, two hundred and eighty-four rods; and is bounded on all sides by unappropriated land. It is also stated that the southwest corner is forty or fifty rods south of a brook and meadow. On the plan is represented the Northfield road entering the grant ten rods north of the southeast corner and extending north  $47^{\circ}$  west, until it leaves it near the centre of the northern side. In the easterly part of this grant is the farm of the late Deacon Daniel Jones and in the western part is the No. 7 school-house. In 1737, the grantees sold the whole tract to William Jones and Ephraim Wetherbee, both of Lunenburg, for ninety pounds. The same year Mr. Wetherbee sold his interest to Ephraim Wheeler of Lancaster. In these ancient deeds it is called the Bellows farm and the name of Bluefield does not appear. William Jones died in 1761. In his will his interest in this land is devised to two of his sons, Enos and Isaac. The latter son died soon after the death of his honored father and the heirs, in 1773, joined in a deed conveying their interest to Enos who was then residing on the premises.

V. THE CONVERSE GRANT.—Several grants of land were bestowed upon the heirs of Major James Converse of Woburn in recognition of distinguished service rendered the colony, among them was a grant of four hundred acres of land located in this town. In the House of Representatives, December 9, 1734, it was ordered that the petition of Robert



and Josiah Converse, sons of Major James Converse, be revived and that they be granted four hundred acres on the condition that "within five years the petitioners settle two families on the granted premises, each of which to have an house of eighteen feet square and seven feet stud at the least and four acres each brought to and plowed or stocked with English grass and fitted for mowing." The land was surveyed by Joseph Wilder in May and the title confirmed by the General Court June 10, 1735. The descriptive portion of these papers is as follows :

Said land lieth on the northerly side of one of the towns called Narragansett viz : No. 2 and bounds Southerly thereon. Easterly it bounds on a farm of four hundred acres laid out to the heirs of Thomas Starr, Northerly and Westerly by common or province lands. It began at stake and stones the South Corner of the aforesaid farm and from thence it ran with it North 18 degrees West three hundred and thirty Rods to a stake and stones ; from thence it ran west 18 degrees South Two hundred and Eight rods to a stake and stones ; and from thence it ran South Eighteen degrees East three hundred and thirty Rods to the aforesaid Narragansett line to a stake and stones and then with said line East 18 degrees North two hundred and eight rods to where it began.

In other terms this grant was located on the Westminster line extending west from the Starr grant nearly to South Ashburnham village. Robert Converse immediately sold his interest to his brother Josiah, who sold it to Gershom Keyes of Boston, October 10, 1735, for one hundred and fifty pounds. It passes through several hands and is soon sold to Hezekiah Gates, who in 1746 sold it to Joseph Wilder, Jr., and as stated it then became a part of the Wilder farm.

VI. THE ROLFE GRANT.—Rev. Benjamin Rolfe, the second minister of Haverhill, was slain by the Indians in their attack upon that town August 29, 1708. His wife and



one child were also killed. "Two daughters were preserved by Hagar, the maid servant, who covered them with tubs in the cellar." A son also escaped as appears in the records of this grant. The surviving children are petitioners in 1735 for a tract of land on account of the service of their father and were granted six hundred acres which subsequently became and still remains an important part of this town. The records of the General Court recites the petition in these words :

A Petition of Benjamin Rolfe and the Rest of the heirs of the Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Benjamin Rolfe, late of Haverhill deceased, showing that his said father was employed divers times as Chaplin to the Forces in the late wars and once in an actual Engagement with the Indian Enemy and afterwards settled in the work of the Ministry at Haverhill where he with their mother was killed by the Indians and therefore praying that this Court would Grant to the Pet<sup>r</sup> and his sisters some of the waste lands of the Province.

In response to their petition the General Court June 17, 1735, granted six hundred acres. The land was surveyed by Joseph Wilder, previous to November 7, when the chainmen, John Bennett and Joseph Wheelock, made oath that they had performed the service "without favor or affection and according to their best judgment." The grant was confirmed December 23, 1735.

This tract of land, known many years as the Rolfe farm, is located in the southeast corner of this town between the Starr and the Cambridge grants. It is bounded east 120 rods by Fitchburg, south 414 rods by Westminster, west 330 rods by the Starr grant, and northerly 320 rods by Cambridge grant and a line of 210 rods joining the corners of the two last named grants. Phillips' Brook and the Fitchburg road divide this tract into two unequal portions, the



greater part lying east of them. Northerly it extends one mile from the Westminster line or to the farm of the late Dr. Merrick Wallace. The Rolfe heirs retained the grant until 1750 when it was sold to John Greenwood of Boston for two hundred and thirty pounds. He sold it out in the years immediately following in several lots, and in this way it came into the possession of the early settlers.

#### VII. THE DORCHESTER CANADA OR TOWNSHIP GRANT.

—The immediate consideration leading to the grant of this township and others in the vicinity, is found in connection with the expedition to Canada in 1690. The story of this ill-fated exploit forms an interesting chapter in the early history of New England. The hardships and misfortunes of the hazardous enterprise were shared by companies of soldiers from Dorchester, Ipswich, Rowley and many other towns in the colony. In fitting out a force of two thousand soldiers and thirty-two ships the treasury of the colony was so greatly depleted that nothing was left for the payment of the soldiers on their return. In this emergency the colony resorted to the issue of treasury notes to the amount of one hundred and thirty-three thousand pounds which was the first paper money ever issued in New England. These notes, founded simply on the good intentions of an impoverished colony, so rapidly depreciated in value that the soldiers, to whom they had been paid, sought indemnity from the General Court. For a long time their solicitations were persistently pressed and renewed without avail until an era of grants of land came to their relief. About 1735, after many of the petitioners were dead, the General Court, influenced, possibly, as much by a newly formed policy of encouraging settlements along the line of the disputed boundaries between New Hampshire and Massachusetts, as by any other consideration, granted a township to each company of sixty soldiers



and the heirs of those deceased. On account of the service for which they were bestowed these grants were styled Canada townships and they generally received the additional name of the town in which a majority of the petitioners resided. To the soldiers from Dorchester were assigned this town which bore the name of Dorchester Canada many years. In the same manner and at the same time was granted Ipswich Canada, now Winchendon, and immediately after Rowley Canada, now Rindge. There were many other Canada townships but not in this immediate vicinity. The adjustment of the province line found several of these townships in New Hampshire and their charters were annulled.

In January, 1735, the General Court, premonitory to some action in the premises, ordered the appointment of a committee to take into consideration these petitions of the soldiers and "report what may be proper for the Court to do." The day following, the committee cleared the deck for action in recommending that a township of six miles square be granted to every collection of sixty soldiers or the heirs of those deceased and that these grants be located between the Merrimack and Connecticut rivers. The committee further recommended that these grants be given under certain restrictions, which need not be stated in this connection, as they are repeated in the charters that were subsequently enacted. Without great delay, four townships were granted under one charter which passed the House June 10, the Council June 18, and was approved by Governor Belcher, December 29, 1735. In the order named in the charter these towns are now known as Warwick, Ashburnham, Guilford, Vermont, and Winchendon, and all of them are of equal age. Should the neighboring towns, Ashburnham and Winchendon, contend for the honors of antiquity, we can enjoy the ample consolation that in the charter, the name of Tilestone precedes that of Tilton.



It would be easy to be led into the error of presuming that each of these towns was created under a specific grant, for the Deputy Secretary made copies for the grantees of each town. In some of them, at least, is omitted all reference to the three remaining towns. These copies have been mistaken for independent charters. The quadripartite grant or charter is here given :

In the House of Representatives June 10, 1735.

In Answer to the four Petitions of Samuel Newel and others, Thomas Tilestone and others, Samuel Gallop and others, and Abraham Tilton and others :

Voted, That four Several Tracts of Land for Townships each of the Contents of Six Miles Square be Laid out in Suitable Places in the western Parts of this Province and that the whole of each Town be laid out into Sixty three equal Shares, one of which to be for the first Settled minister, one to be for the use of the Ministry and one for the School ; and that on the other Sixty Shares in each Town there be Sixty Settlers admitted and in the admission thereof Preference to be given to the Petitioners and such as are Descendents of the officers and soulders who Served in the Expedition to Canada in the year 1690. Viz one Tract of Land for a Township to the said Samuel Newell & others, one other Tract of Land to the said Thomas Tilestone and others, one other Tract of Land to the said Samuel Gallop and others and the other Tract of Land to the said Abraham Tilton and others and in Case there be not a sufficient number of Persons named in each of the said four Petitions as ware either officers or Soulders in the said Expedition or the Descendants of Such as were lost or are since Deceased So as to make Sixty Settlers for each Town. That then Such others as ware in the Expedition or their Descendants be admitted Settlers there untell Sixty Persons in each Town be admitted and inasmuch as the officers and Soulders in that Expedition ware very great Sufferers and underwent uncommon Hardships, Voted that this Province be at the Sole Charge of laying out the said four



Townships in a Regular manner and of admitting the Settlers. — That the Settlers or Grantees be and hereby are obliged to bring forward the Settlement of the said four Townships in as Regular & defensible a manner as the Situation and the Circumstances of the Places will admit of, and that in the following manner, Viz. That they be on the Granted Premises Respectively and have each of them an House of eighteen Feet square and seven Feet stud at the least. That each Right or Grant have six Acres of Land brought to and Plowed or brought to English Grass and fitted for mowing. That they respectively Settle in each Plantation or Township a Learned and Orthodox minister and Bild a Convenient Meeting House for the Publick Worship of God in each Township. The whole of these Conditions to be duly complied with within five years from the Confirmation of the Plats.

And that John Bowles and John Metcalf Esq<sup>r</sup> with such as the Honourable Board shall appoint be the Committee for laying out the Township hereby Granted to Samuel Newell and others; Thomas Tilestone Esq<sup>r</sup> and M<sup>r</sup> William Royall with such as the Honourable Board shall appoint shall be the Committee for laying out the Township hereby granted to Thomas Tilestone & others; Charles Church and Joseph Mason Esq<sup>r</sup> with such as the Honourable Board shall appoint be the Committee for laying out the Township hereby granted to Samuel Gallop and others; and Cap<sup>t</sup> John Hobson and Cap<sup>t</sup> John Choate with such as the Honourable Board shall appoint be the Committee for Laying out the Township hereby granted to Abraham Tilton & others, for laying out the Townships Respectively & admitting the Settlers as aforesaid who shall take Bond of each Grantee to the Value of Twenty Pounds to the Province Treasurer for the Respective Grantees Fullfillment of the Conditions of their Grants each lot as aforesaid to be entitled to and draw future Divisions in equal Proportions in the Townships or Plantations Respectively and that the Committee return the Plats of the said Townships to this Court within twelve months for Confirmation, as also a List of the Names of the Respective Grantees and their Place of Residence into the Secretarys Office that so the same may be examined and



Regulated by a Committee that may be hereafter for that Purpose appointed by the Court and further it is ordered that in case any of the Grantees shall neglect or delay to fullfill the Terms of this Grant such Person or Persons shall forfeit to the Province all his or their Right and Interest in the land hereby granted.

Sent up for Concurrence

J. QUINCY, Spkr.

In Council June 18 1735: —

Read & Concurred, and ordered that William Dudley Esq<sup>r</sup> be joyned to the Committee for laying out the first Township, Joseph Wilder Esq<sup>r</sup> for the second, Edward Goddard Esq<sup>r</sup> for the third and Thomas Berry Esq<sup>r</sup> for the fourth Township.

J. WILLARD Sec<sup>ry</sup>

December 29 Consented to

J. BELCHER.

Immediately following the grant of these townships the General Court instructed the several committees charged with the distribution of the land to give "preference to the eldest male heir if such there be otherwise to the eldest female" and that the heir of any soldier deceased receiving a right or one-sixtieth part of a township, "shall pay the other descendants or heirs of the deceased soldier their proportionable part of ten pounds." These committees were further instructed to exercise "the Best Care they Can in Examining and Regulating the Claims of all Persons that shall appear as Heirs, Descendants or Representatives to make and keepe fair Lists of the names and Places of Residence of the Respective Grantees or Settlers of the said Towns in order to prevent Mistakes in settling and Regulating the Claims and admission of the Grantees." At the same time it was ordered that if the expense of surveying and admitting settlers exceed fifty pounds the excess should be paid by the grantees. The former vote to pay the whole expense had been in consideration that "the officers and soldiers in that expedition ware very



great sufferers and underwent uncommon Hardships." In the amended vote it is made reasonably certain that their estimate of the great suffering and uncommon hardship of every sixty soldiers and the heirs of those deceased did not exceed, when expressed in financial terms, the sum of fifty pounds.

Under the direction of the committee consisting of Joseph Wilder, Thomas Tilestone and William Royal, the township of Dorchester Canada was promptly surveyed by Jonas Houghton. The report of the survey dated January, 1736, the day of the month omitted, is substantially repeated in the act of confirmation which was passed June 1, 1736.

A Plat of a Tract of Six miles Square Granted to Thomas Tilestone Esq & others for a Township laid out by Jonas Houghton Survey<sup>r</sup> and Chainmen on oath, Bounding Southerly on the Narragansett Township No two; Westerly by a Township laid out for Tilton & others Northerly by a Township laid out for Ipswich and Easterly part on Townshend and part on Lunenburg. It begins at a Hemlock the North Easterly Corner of the said Narragansett Town & Runs West 18 deg. South seven Miles wanting twenty Rods from thence North 12 deg East Eight miles & two hundred Rods. and from East 12 deg South Seven miles and 100 perch from thence Southerly by said Townshend line One thousand One hundred & twenty & by Lunenburg line Six hundred & twenty Rods to where it first began.

In the House of Represent<sup>a</sup>: Read and Ordered that the within plat be and hereby is accepted and the Lands therein Delinated & Described are accordingly Confirmed to the Grantees Mentioned in the Petition of Thomas Tilestone Esq<sup>r</sup> and others in behalf of the officers and Soldiers in the Canada Expedition Anno 1690 which passed this Court in their late Sittings and to their heirs and assigns and Lawfull Represent<sup>as</sup> Respectively forever: they Complying with the Conditions of the Grant. Provided the Plat exceeds not the quantity of Six Miles Square with an addition of Three Thousand Eight hundred and Fifty Acre



formerly Granted and contained in the plat and three hundred acres allowed for Ponds and does not Interfere with any former Grant. .

In Council Read & Concurred

Consented to

J. BELCHER.

Our new township now assumes the name of Dorchester Canada, which it retains until the incorporation of Ashburnham in 1765. As yet it is merely a defined portion of the wilderness. The rudest habitation of man has nowhere a place in the unbroken forest. The echoes from the bustle and activity of civilization have never answered back from the surrounding hills nor floated over the lakes. But now the compass and the chain, the heralds of the approach of man, hem the forests within the pale of the axe and the torch and the greed of gain fastens its despoiling hands upon the hills and the valleys which for centuries have been sleeping in the beauty and quietude of nature.

The influences which guided the committee to this locality can never be fully known. The assignment of any reason, at this late day, is speculative. If they came by the way of Lunenburg this was the first unappropriated land they had found. It is a fact, also, that one of the committee was not a stranger to the place. The summer preceding Joseph Wilder had been here as the surveyor of the Starr, the Converse and the Rolfe grants.

The attentive reader has observed that in the act of confirmation, Dorchester Canada is bounded on all sides by township lines. A literal construction of the terms employed would lead to the conclusion that the committee here found a tract of unappropriated land entirely surrounded by established towns, with an area so accommodating that an exact equivalent to six miles square was conveniently left for their



acceptance. The terms defining the western and northern boundaries need explanation. At this time Tilton's town or Ipswich Canada had not been surveyed, but it is within reason to infer there was an understanding between the two committees that Ipswich Canada was to be located next west of Dorchester Canada. In fact, Ipswich Canada was not laid out until the summer following. New Ipswich bounding on the north had not been surveyed at this time, but it was located before Dorchester Canada was confirmed. The south and the east boundaries were already established, and now the surveyor runs the west line parallel to the old Lunenburg line and the north line at a right angle and locates them so as to include the required area.

The allowance of 3850 acres for former grants and 300 acres for ponds required the surveyor to lay out 27,190 acres instead of 23,040 stipulated in the charter. The survey contained about 27,700 acres which was not an unusual allowance for uneven ground.

In this account of the several grants an attempt has been made to discover where each was located and for what consideration it was bestowed. An outline sketch, at the close of this chapter, presents a summary view of the form and relative position of the township and the six smaller and earlier grants which were included within its boundaries. The lapse of time will add interest to these initial features of our local history. In these early grants, extending wider and wider from the centres of population, new fields were dedicated to the occupancy of man. To this portion of the wilderness which has now been located and outlined the succeeding chapters will welcome the arrival of the settlers, and attend them while they fell the forest, build houses for their families, establish churches and schools and wisely direct the civil affairs of the new settlement.

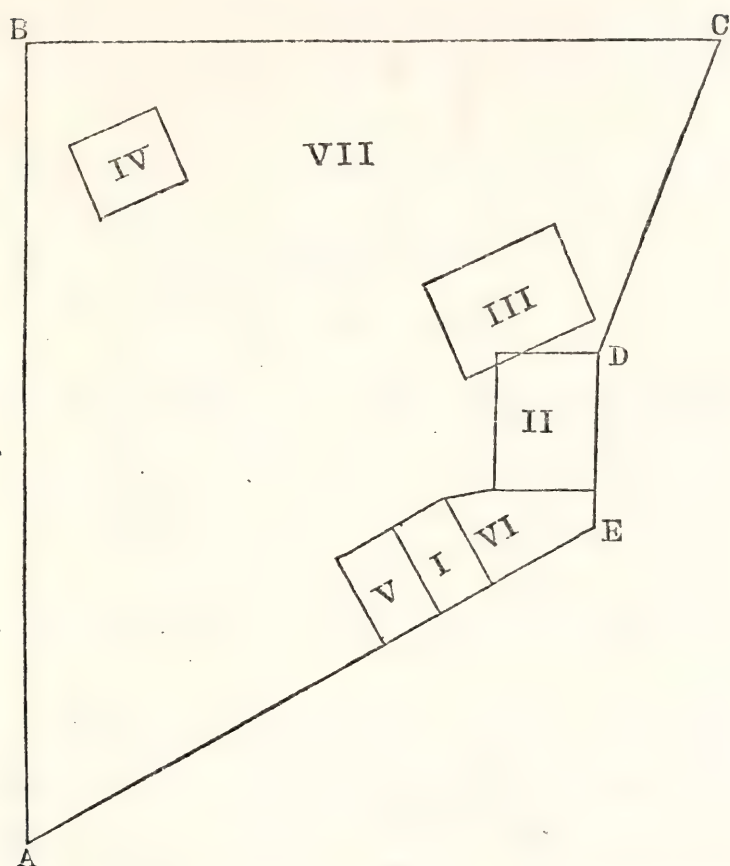


Many of the persons named in this chapter will appear again. Unless incidentally mentioned the names of others associated with these events will not be repeated in the following chapters. Ebenezer Prescott, Jonas Houghton and David Farrar, the surveyors, were residents of Lancaster. Jonas Houghton was also employed in the original survey of New Ipswich. Ephraim Wetherbee and Hilkiah Boynton were of Lunenburg. Ephraim Wetherbee was chairman for Nathan Heywood in the first survey of Rindge. Colonel Josiah and Moses Willard were leading men in Lunenburg at the date of their mention in this chapter. They were among the grantees of Winchester, New Hampshire, and became prominent in the annals of Cheshire county. Their only interest in this town was in connection with the Northfield road which extended through the township and opened a way to their lands in New Hampshire.

Colonel Benjamin Bellows was also of Lunenburg at this date. Subsequently he removed to Walpole, New Hampshire, which for a time was called Bellowstown. Combined with a remarkable business capacity were energy and decision of character. It was his son Benjamin who was a general in the Revolution and through a long and useful life distinguished in civil affairs.

Major James Converse was of Woburn where he closed an active and eventful life July 8, 1706. He was a member of the General Court and three times elected speaker of the House. In military affairs he was equally distinguished and his gallant defence of Storer's garrison in 1688 is mentioned in complimentary terms in the histories of the time. His sons, Robert and Josiah, to whom the land in this town was granted on account of the service of their father, were influential citizens of Woburn, although for a short time Josiah is found residing in Leicester.





A B— Ipswich Canada Line — South part now in Gardner.

B C— New Ipswich Line — now New Ipswich and Rindge.

C D— Old Townsend Line — now in Ashby.

D E— Old Lunenburg Line — now Fitchburg.

A E— Westminster Line — West part now in Gardner.

I— Starr Grant.

II— Cambridge Grant.

III— Lexington Grant.

IV— Bluefield Grant.

V— Converse Grant.

VI— Rolfe Grant.

VII— Dorchester Canada.



## CHAPTER II.

### PROPRIETARY HISTORY.

THE TOWNSHIP AWARDED TO SIXTY PERSONS. — THEIR INFLUENCE OVER THE SETTLEMENT. — PROCEEDINGS OF THE FIRST MEETING. — CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP OF THE PROPRIETORS. — HOUSE LOTS SURVEYED. — SITE FOR MEETING-HOUSE SELECTED. — SAW-MILL PROPOSED. — SECOND DISTRIBUTION OF LAND. — A PULPING-MILL SUGGESTED. — THE FIRST MEETING-HOUSE. — WAR WITH HEZEKIAH GATES. — THE PROVINCE LINE. — MOSSMAN'S INN. — FEAR OF INDIANS. — BLOCK-HOUSE BUILT. — THE SETTLEMENT TEMPORARILY ABANDONED. — THE SITUATION. — CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP OF THE PROPRIETORS. — PERSONAL NOTICES. — MOSSMAN'S PETITION.

DORCHESTER CANADA now falls into the possession of its new proprietors. Three shares or rights are reserved for public uses, and sixty are bestowed upon the persons contemplated by the charter. Thus each person to whom is allotted a right becomes the owner of one sixty-third part of the township. The committee promptly completed the service enjoined in the charter by naming the persons who were entitled to a share in the grant. Fifty-four rights were bestowed on account of service under Captain John Withington of Dorchester, and six to the soldiers, or their legal representatives, in other companies. Fortunately the report of this committee has been preserved. It presents a sad record of mortality. Only one soldier, Philip Godding, comes forward and receives in person this late reward for service to the colony. It is certain, however, that a few others, repre-



sented on this occasion by their relatives, were still living. The sixty rights in the township were assigned as follows :

- 1 — Thomas Wilder of Lancaster in Right of His wife Susannah eldest Daughter to John Pope.
- 2 — John Swift Jun<sup>r</sup> of Framingham in the Right of His Father Mr John Swift eldest Brother to William Swift.
- 3 — Joseph Warren of Roxbury in the Right of Elias Monk of Stoughton.
- 4 — Benjamin Cheney of Dorchester in the Right of his Brother William Cheney.
- 5 — Joseph Triscott of Dorchester in the Right of His Father Joseph Triscott.
- 6 — Humphrey Atherton of Stoughton in the Right of His Father Consider Atherton.
- 7 — Jonathan Chandler of Dorchester in the Right of His Brother Samuel Chandler.
- 8 — Matathias Evens of Dorchester in the Right of His Brother Richard Evens at the Desire of his Eldest Brother Thomas Evens.
- 9 — John Toalman Jun<sup>r</sup> in the Right of His Father John Toalman of Dorchester and at His Desire.
- 10 — Seth Sumner of Milton in the Right of His Uncle Josianiah Sumner at the Desire of His uncle William Sumner.
- 11 — John Robinson Jun<sup>r</sup> of Dorchester in Behalf of his Father John Robinson eldest Brother to James Robinson.
- 12 — Ebenezer Crane of Braintree in the Right of Ebenezer Crane.
- 13 — William Blake of Milton in the Right of James Morey in Behalf of his Mother Martha Blake eldest Daughter to said James Morey.
- 14 — John Andrews of Dorchester in the Right of His Brother Thomas Andrews.
- 15 — Joseph Leads of Dorchester in Behalf of His Wife Mary eldest Sister to Joseph Weeks.
- 16 — Thomas Lyon Jun<sup>r</sup> of Dorchester in Behalf of His Father Thomas Lyon Eldest Brother to Henry Lyon.



- 17 — Richard Withington of Dorchester in the Right of His Father Capt John Withington.
- 18 — Joseph Weeks of Dorchester in the Right of His Brother Thomas Weeks.
- 19 — Mr William Cooper of Boston in the Right of Benjamin Hewins, at the Desire of Joseph Hewins eldest Brother of said Benjamin Hewins.
- 20 — Obadiah Swift of Dorchester in the Right of His Brother James Swift.
- 21 — Hezekiah Parber of Dorchester in the Right of Yonnite Modsley at the Desire of His Brother Thomas Modsley.
- 22 — Ralph Pope of Dorchester in the Right of His Brother Ebenezer Pope.
- 23 — Samuel Butt of Dorchester in the Right of His Uncle Richard But.
- 24 — David Joans of Wrentham in the Right of His Uncle John Joans.
- 25 — Samuel Sumner of Taunton in the Right of His Father Samuel Sumner.
- 26 — Josiah Baker of Boston in the Right of His Uncle William Baker.
- 27 — Mr. William Cooper of Boston in the Right of His Uncle George Menott.
- 28 — Edward Kelton of Dorchester in the Right of His Father Thomas Kelton.
- 29 — Robert Redman of Stoughton in the Right of His Father Charles Redman.
- 30 — Samuel Kneeland of Boston in the Right of Ammiel Weeks at the Desire of His son George Weeks.
- 31 — Neemiah Clap of Milton in the Right of His Brother Edward Clap.
- 32 — Timothy Tilestone of Dorchester in the Right of His Brother Cornelius Tilestone.
- 33 — Samuel Hinshua of Milten in the Right of Daniel Hinshua His Uncles son.



- 34 — Edward Sumner of Roxbury in the Right of His Uncle Samuel Sumner.
- 35 — Benjamin Sumner of Milten in the Right of His Brother William Sumner.
- 36 — Robert Cook of Needham in the Right of His Brother William Cook.
- 37 — Bartholame Gold of Boston in the Right of His Uncle Ebenezer Sumner.
- 38 — John Charhore of Milten in the Right of His Uncle John Charhore.
- 39 — Benjamin Bird Jun<sup>r</sup> of Dorchester in the Right of His Uncle Thomas Bird.
- 40 — Samuel Blake of Taunton in the Right of His uncle William Blake.
- 41 — Thomas Tilestone Esqr of Dorchester in the Right of Capt. John Galliver at the desire of Jonathan Galliver who was admitted a Settler.
- 42 — Timothy Mossman of Sudbury in the Right of His wife's Brother Samuel Hix.
- 43 — Joshua George of Attleborough in the Right of His Brother William George.
- 44 — James Atherton of Harvard in the Right of His Uncle Joseph Atherton.
- 45 — William Sumner of Milton in the Right of William Sumner His Uncle Increase Sumners Son.
- 46 — Elizabeth Trescott of Milton in the Right of Her Brother Samuel Trescott.
- 47 — Joseph Chaplin of Roxbury in the Right of His Brother Moses Chaplin.
- 48 — Hezekiah Barber of Dorchester in the Right of Eliab Lyon at the Deseir of Zachariah Lyon Son of Nathaniel Lyon Eldest Brother to said Eliab Lyon.
- 49 — Waitestill Lyon of Dorchester in the Right of Her Uncle Edward Wiat.
- 50 — Benjamin Mansfield of Dorchester in the Right of His Neffue Peter Kelley.



- 51 — Samuel Burch of Dorchester in the Right of His Uncle Eliazer Wales.
- 52 — Isaac How of Dorchester in the Right of His Cussen Joseph Curtice.
- 53 — Thomas Tilestone Esq<sup>r</sup> of Dorchester in the Right of Hopestill Sanders in Behalf of John Sanders.
- 54 — William Royal of Stoughton in the Right of Samuel Sanders in Behalf of John Sanders.
- 55 — John Sheperd of Stoughton in the Right of His Uncle John Sheperd — Maj<sup>r</sup> Wade.
- 56 — Philip Gooding of Stoughton who sarved under Maj<sup>r</sup> Wade.
- 57 — Joseph Wilder Esq<sup>r</sup> of Lancaster in the Right of His Uncle Samuel Wheeler who sarved in the Expedition to Canada under Maj<sup>r</sup> Nathanel Wade.
- 58 — Nathan Heywood of Lunenburg in the Right of John Willis His Wives Father who sarved under Capt Savage.
- 59 — Oliver Wilder of Lancaster in the Right of Jonathan Fairbank who sarved under Cap<sup>t</sup> Champney.
- 60 — Joseph Wheelock of Lancaster in the Right of His Uncle Timothy Wheelock who sarved under Cap<sup>t</sup> Anderson.

Except Timothy Mossman, none of these original proprietors ever resided in the township, yet several of them, or their sons, retained their interest and attended the meetings of the propriety for many years. The Wilders, the Sumners, Joseph Wheelock, Nathan Heywood and Hezekiah Barber became intimately associated with the fortunes of the settlement. The descendants of several of these proprietors were subsequently among the most useful and valued citizens of Ashburnham. Here is found the probable cause which led to a residence here of the Wilder, Kelton and Crehore families. And in the succeeding records, as the change of ownership introduces new names, will appear the first mention of other families which have been honorably associated with the annals of the town. A miniature town was con-



ceeded in this report of 1736. To sixty men and their successors was committed the destiny of a future Ashburnham. Had the decision of the committee passed by these names and bestowed the grant on sixty other persons, the drama would have proceeded with the scene unchanged, but the actors and all the incidents of the play would have been changed. A town with a parallel history would have succeeded, but the name, the men, the order and color of the events would not be those which fill the pages of our annals.

While these proceedings were in progress, the General Court had passed an order empowering Timothy Tilestone to call the first meeting of the proprietors. This warrant is dated September 8, 1736, and the meeting was assembled in Dorchester fourteen days later. The proceedings of the first meeting outline plans and projects for the benefit of the proposed settlement which are not consummated for many years. The record of the meeting is as follows :

Att a Meeting of the Proprietors of a Township Granted to the Officers and Soldiers in the Expedition to Canada anno 1690 in the Company under the Command of Capt John Withington late Deceased on the 22 Day of Sept 1736 att the Turkshead in Dorchester, Legally warned.

Voted That Thomas Tilestone Esqr be moderator.

Voted To Lay out the Land as Soon as may be.

Voted the first Division Lots to be fifty acres and the Committee to ad thereto for badness of Land.

Voted That the Committee shall Consist of Six men and four of them to be a quorum.

Voted That Edward Hartwell Esq. Benjamin Bird Mr Samuel Sumner Mr Benjamin Sumner Mr Isaac Howe & Joseph Wilder Esqr be a Committee to Lay out the first Division Lots.

Voted That the Committee do agree with the Surveyors and Chain men.



Voted That the Surveyors each Shall have fifteen shillings per Day, they to support them Selves.

Voted That the Chainmen each Shall have ten Shillings per Day they to support them Selves.

Voted That the Committee Shall have Twelve Shillings per Day they to Support them Selves.

Voted That when an so often as any five or more of the Proprietors shall judge a Proprietor's Meeting to be necessary they may make Application to the Proprietors Clerk for the Calling of a meeting Expressing the time and the place and the Occasion thereof and the said Clerk is hereby Impowered to Grant the same for such Meeting accordingly and to Notify the Proprietors of the Said Meeting and the time and place for the same, which Notification Shall be given in Writing Posted up in Some Public Place or Places in Dorchester, Milton, & Stoughton Fourteen Days before the Day appointed for the Meeting and the Notification to be put to the Public Prints.

Voted to have a Clerks Book.

Voted that evry Proprietor to have a Plan of his first Division Lot he Paying for the same.

Voted That evry Proprietor Come att the Next Meeting to Draw his first Division Lot, he to pay for the Laying of said Lot out before he Draws said Lot.

Voted That the Committee Vew a Covenant Spot for the Meeting House and that the said Committee leve Covenant High ways.

Voted to leve Covenant Places for a Mill or Mills Common for the use of the Proprietors.

Voted that the Committee leve out thouse peices of Medow they think Proper to be left out for the use of the Proprietors.

Voted that Benjamin Bird be the Proprietor's Clerk and the said Bird tuck the following oath :

Whereas you Benjamin Bird are Chosen by a Majority of the Voters to be Clerk to the Proprietors of the Township Granted by



the General Court to the Company under Capt. Withington in the Expedition to Canada You do Swear by the true and ever-living God that you will Duly and faithfully Discharge that Trust according to your best Skill and Knowledge. So Help you God.

PROVINCE OF THE MASSACHUSETTS BAY S S.

Sept. the 22<sup>th</sup> 1736.

Then the above Named Benjamin Bird Parsonally appearing made Oath as above. Before me

JOSEPH WILDER Justice of  
the Peace through the Province.

Thus ends the record of the first meeting of the proprietors. An organization had been effected and the clerk had been sworn in solemn form. It is worthy of note that after taking the oath Mr. Bird seldom again spelled *at* with two ts while he held the office. His best skill and judgment had been invoked. At this meeting appears for the first time Edward Hartwell of Lunenburg. He was not an original proprietor but had purchased a right of Joseph Leads and became an active and leading member of the organization. Thomas Tilestone, to whom in the admission of proprietors was assigned two rights, now owns the former rights of John Chandler and Samuel Burch; the four rights were probably acquired by purchase. Although the figure head of the petition to the General Court it does not appear that Mr. Tilestone was entitled by inheritance to any interest in the grant which had been secured mainly through his influence. William White now owns the right of David Jones and the right of Waitstill Lyon is held by Thomas Stearns. Jonathan Dwight of Boston takes the place of Joseph Chaplin, and Andrew Wilder, Jr., of Lancaster, is the owner of one of the rights of Hezekiah Barber, while James Mears and Timothy Green represent the rights formerly of Benjamin Cheney and Elizabeth Triscott.



A spirit of activity pervades the record of the first meeting. Hardly had a moderator been chosen before a vote was passed to lay out a house lot for each proprietor "as soon as may be." Five days after the meeting, the six members of the committee, in full sympathy with the zealous enthusiasm of their associates, attended by two surveyors and nine chainmen and assistants, are upon the ground. For fifteen days the stillness of the woods is broken by the sound of the axe and the strong voices of sturdy men. In their dying echoes is heard the doom of the primeval forest. The sleep of centuries is ended. The entire expanse of foliage warmed in an autumn sun will never again present its varied hues in an unbroken picture of grandeur and beauty. The despoiling agency of man has been invoked and soon the flame and smoke from the clearing of the settler will announce the preparation for his habitation. Under the direction of the committee sixty-three house lots are laid out by Andrew Wilder, Jr., and Joseph Wilder, Jr. The chainmen and assistants were nearly all proprietors who had come hither to view their new possessions. These lots were located on the west, south and east shores of Upper Naukeag lake, then extending south through the Centre Village and east to Cambridge farm, then westerly on the north lines of the Rolfe, Starr and Converse farms and on the west line of the latter farm to the line of Westminster, covering the site of the South Village, but not so far west as the line of the Cheshire and Vermont and Massachusetts railroads. Two lots were detached and located in the present limits of Ashby. The remaining lots were in one continuous tract of irregular form. In these lots were included three thousand one hundred and fifty acres, exclusive of any allowance that might have been made for inequality of land. The remainder of the grant, or above three hundred acres for each right, was still owned



in common by the proprietors. These surveys were completed October 11. Meanwhile the committee had selected a site for the meeting-house and had laid out roads leading to it. For this service the committee and those employed by them were paid £152-16-6. The sum of £2 was "Paid Sundry People at Sundry times for Bringing the Horses out of the woods," while £2-19 was paid for pasturing horses, which possibly indicates that some of the horses were pastured at expense on improved lands in Lunenburg, being more highly favored than those let loose in the woods.

The second meeting of the proprietors was held November 10, of the same year. While it was assembled under a new warrant, or notification, as our worthies styled it, it was practically a continuation of the former meeting. The account of the committee already mentioned was allowed and to pay the same an assessment was ordered. This action called for a new class of officials. Samuel Sumner and Edward Hartwell were chosen assessors, Thomas Lyon, Jr., collector, and Benjamin Bird, treasurer. The following extract from the records outlines the most important of the proceedings :

Voted the Confirmation of the place Marked out by the Committee for Building the Meeting House on, and the Highways they have Laid out thereunto in Said Town. The Meeting House Lot Contains 10 acres lying squar and it Lieth on a Hill 180 Rods South of a Greate Pond and has a very faire Prospeck. The North East Corner is a young Pitch Pine and thence it Runs west 40 Rods to a stake and Pillar of Stons and thence South 40 Rods to a stake and Heep of Stones and thence it Runs East 40 Rods to a stake and Heepe of Stons and thence it Runs North 40 Rods to whare it began.

Voted to Clear the Highway, and Edward Hartwell Esq<sup>r</sup>, Capt. Oliver Wilder and M<sup>r</sup> Joseph Wheelock were Chosen a



Committee for that Service and also to Fire the Woods the first Covenant time.

Voted that Edward Hartwell Esq<sup>r</sup>, Capt Oliver Wilder and Mr Joseph Wheelock be a Committee to a Gree with a Sutable Person or Persons to Build a Sawmill in said Town in the most Covenant Place that they Can find therefor. and That in Giving encouragement to any Person to undertake therein they do not exceed one Hundred acres of Land and that they oblige the Person so undertaking (by Bond or other ways) to have the Mill Going within the space of five months and to Keep the same in Repair for the space of Ten years and that he saw Boards for the Proprietors for forty shillings a Thousand and Saw timber Brought to said Mill for Twenty shillings a Thousand and other Timber Proportionable.

The same month the committee charge the proprietors for four days each, three hired laborers four days each and one man one day in clearing the roads leading to the place set apart for the meeting-house and a common, which we are here informed and fully realize "has a very faire Prospeck."

At this meeting the house or first division lots are distributed among the proprietors. The eighth lot is reserved for the ministry, the ninth for schools and the fifty-seventh for the first settled minister. Here ends the record of the first year. A New England winter regains control of the wilderness and for a time closes the door against the progress of the settlement.

**1737.** With the arrival of spring, the committee chosen for that purpose enter into negotiations with Hezekiah Gates of Lancaster to build a saw-mill within the township for the accommodation of the settlement. The committee grant him ninety acres of land, lying on the stream between the Upper and Lower Naukeag lakes and receive from him a bond of five hundred pounds, obliging him to build and conduct the



mill on the terms outlined in the vote of the proprietors. The charges of the committee for their services establish the date of these proceedings :

1737 May 17 the Committee four days each

with the man that is to Build the saw mill @ 10 <sup>s</sup>	£6 — 0 — 0 —
$\frac{1}{2}$ day each to signe the Righting	0 — 15 — 0 —
the writings with M <sup>r</sup> Gates	0 — 3 — 0 —

In effecting an agreement with Mr. Gates the committee consume ample time in its consideration and apparently conduct the business to the present satisfaction of the proprietors, but in the years immediately following both Mr. Gates and his mill were an endless source of perplexity and litigation. The proprietors continually complain of the construction and management, while he successfully resists their directions to raise the dam and make repairs, until the fact gradually develops that there is a better head on Gates than at his mill, and more revolving power in his mind than in his wheel.

Two formal meetings of the proprietors are held this year at the "Turks Head Tavern in Dorchester," and Henry Woodman, James Bishop, Joseph Bent and Joseph Herbert make their first appearance as proprietors in place of Matthias Evans, John Andrews, Joseph Weeks and Thomas Lyon, Jr. At the first meeting, August 25, it was voted "to lay out in a second Division, Sixty three Lots in the up land, each lot containing eighty Acres at the least and in case so many Lotts cant be laid out in the very best of said land, that it be in the Power of the Committee to add to every eighty Acre lot so much as to make them equal to the very best Lot, not exceeding Forty Acres to any one Lot."

Andrew Wilder was chosen to lay out the lots and a committee of ten was chosen to conduct the business. At the



second meeting, December 14, the survey of the second division lots was approved, and a lot was assigned to each owner of a right. The tenth lot was reserved for the first settled minister, the eleventh for the ministry and the sixty-third for schools.

The price of labor on the highways was rated at seven shillings per day, and Henry Woodman was added to the committee on highways who were instructed that "but one of said Committee work on that Business at won and the same time." During the year the roads receive the benefit of twenty-three days' labor at a cost of £9-2-0. The charges for laying out the second division lots were £224-9-6, the clerk and treasurer receives £5-7-0, for his services to the close of the year and a few small charges are allowed. To meet these demands an assessment of £258 or £4-6-0 on each right is made. Only one proceeding of interest during this year remains unnoticed :

Voted That Mr Joseph Harbort have five acres of Land and the Stream by it for to Set a fulling Mill he mataining said mill ten years for the Sarves of the Proprietors, the said Proprietors paying him for what work they have don at said Mill. And the Committee that was appointed to a gree with a man for to Bulding a Saw Mill he the Committee to give a Deed and take Bond of said Harbort He Paying the Committee for their troble.

This solitary mention of a fulling-mill is all that is heard of it for many years. The committee, to whom the project was referred, found ample employment in the management of Mr. Gates and his saw-mill. This addition to their perplexity was an act of great unkindness on the part of the proprietors. It is reasonably certain that the grant of land was never consummated, perhaps, admonished by the perilous adventure of Don Quixote and the fulling-mills, the subject is not revived.



1738. Samuel Hayward has become a proprietor representing the right formerly of Robert Redman, and Hezekiah Gates also appears at the meetings of the board, but whose right he has purchased is not certain. Other changes in the membership of the proprietors occur from time to time, but the general management of affairs continues to be referred to those whose names have become familiar. Only one meeting is held this year, which is convened August 22, "at the house of Jonathan Dwight of Boston, Innholder." Timothy Green is elected clerk and treasurer in the place of Benjamin Bird. The saw-mill has been built but the contention concerning its efficiency and management has not as yet sufficiently developed to prevent the proprietors from considering a request from its owner, in a generous and good-natured manner :

Voted That Mr. Hezekiah Gates of Lancaster have liberty to lay out Thirty Acres of Land adjoining to the land he has already laid out at the Mill between the Pond and the lower end of his Land already laid out in part of his Ninety Acres.

Voted that Mr Hezekiah Gates have liberty to build his House on his Land near the Mill and clear as much Land there as any one Proprietor is obliged to do by his Grant.

Also at this meeting Captain Oliver Wilder and Mr. Gates are chosen "to clear a good cart way from the saw mill to the place where the meeting house is to stand as strait as the land will allow of." For this purpose an appropriation not exceeding eight pounds is made. The sentiment of the proprietors was taken in regard to building a meeting-house and "it passed in the negative."

1739. A note of preparation for some weighty undertaking is heard in the early call for a meeting of the proprietors. Earlier by several months than in former years are assembled the controlling spirits of the township. This



memorable meeting was held in Boston April 11, at the house of Mr. Dwight. Notices had been published in the Boston papers and posted at Dorchester and probably at Milton and Stoughton, announcing to the proprietors that they will be invited at this meeting "to consider what is proper to be done about building a meeting house for the worship of God." Of the time for building a meeting-house stipulated in the charter two full years yet remained, and in consideration of the small progress made in the settlement, and that so far the plantation had been a continual source of expense to the proprietors, an excuse for delay is easily found. The record, however, presents no shadow of hesitation but rather the cheerful voice of a united purpose.

Voted That a Meeting House for the Publick Worship of God be Built as soon as conveniently may be, on the Meeting House place in the said Township to be Forty Five Feet Long, Thirty Five Feet wide, the Corner post to be Twenty one Feet high.

Voted That Thomas Tilestone & Edward Hartwell Esq<sup>r</sup> Major Oliver Wilder, Mr. Andrew Wilder and Mr. Hezekiah Barber be the Committee for Building said Meeting House.

Voted That a Tax of Three Hundred Pounds be laid, on the Proprietors, to pay Charges past and towards Building said Meeting House.

An omission to give this record in full would be an act of injustice. The will of the meeting expressed in other terms would conceal, in a great measure, the resolute purpose and firm determination of the act. On the strength of this action alone the meeting-house was built. No postponement, no amendment nor qualification of this action was ever tolerated. In marked contrast with the early history of other towns in this vicinity the first meeting-house was located with rare unanimity and built without contention. The picture of the



"faire Pro-speek" was not marred with an exhibition of the passions of contending men. Under the direction of the committee, the meeting-house was built by Benjamin Ballard, who received in six payments £251-17-0. In his Half Century Sermon, 1818, Rev. Dr. Cushing says: "In 1739, the proprietors erected a meeting house 50 by 40. It was the first frame that was set up in the town and it has been considered, and was at the time, as an extraordinary enterprise that it was raised by only sixteen men." This reference to the year in which it was built is of interest, since the records do not make it appear whether it was built in 1739 or the year following. November 19, 1740, it was voted to pay Mr. Ballard one hundred and fifty pounds in part for building the meeting-house, and at the same time the committee was requested to make a report. While the records admit the conjecture that it might have been built in 1740, there is found no cause to qualify the assertion of Mr. Cushing that it was erected in 1739. In regard to the size of the edifice, it is fair to presume, that referring to it twenty-seven years after it was removed, it would have been easier for Mr. Cushing to overlook the exact dimensions than for the committee to exceed their instructions so far as to erect a meeting-house longer and wider by five feet than directed by the vote of their associates. On one point all the authorities are in harmony. At this time the roof and sides were covered with boards and open spaces were left for windows and doors. It was several years before the roof was improved and doors and windows procured.

Two other meetings were held at Boston this year, at which considerable business was transacted. It was proposed to clear a road leading from Lunenburg to Winchester, New Hampshire, but the ambition of the proprietors was satisfied in the choice of a committee to view and estimate



the expense of a road from the common to the west line of the township. A gratuity of four pounds each was voted to the first fifteen settlers who, previous to May, 1740, should build a house and comply with the other conditions of the grant; and a grant of sixty acres of land was made to "Thomas Gamble who lately met with some loss by fire in said township." An account of this fire, probably the first in the settlement, would be of interest, but no additional information has been found. At a former meeting there had been a decree to prosecute all persons who cut any white pine trees on the undivided lands, and now a committee is chosen to number and mark all the white pine trees fit for clapboards and shingles on the ten-acre common that they may be reserved for future use.

1740. The chronicles now declare the war of 1740. The growing discontent over the continued mismanagement of the saw-mill culminated in acts of open hostility at a meeting, assembled at the inn of Jonathan Dwight, on the tenth of April. The declaration of war is inscribed in a bold, firm hand upon the records :

Voted that Edward Hartwell Esq. of Lunenburg, Col. Oliver Wilder and Joseph Wheelock of Lancaster be a committee to put in suit and pursue to final judgment and execution the bond of Mr. Hezekiah Gates of Lancaster.

Forgetting that their treasury was empty and that Mr. Ballard was waiting for his pay for building the meeting-house, the proprietors do not fail to vote the sinews of war :

Voted that the committee, chosen to put in suit and pursue to final judgment and execution the bond of Hezekiah Gates, have liberty to draw upon the proprietor's treasurer what money may be thought proper and necessary to carry on the suit.



Mr. Gates was sued; probably Daniel Gookin, the first sheriff in Worcester county, served the writ. The discontent of the proprietors had become chronic and relief could not be found in treatment less heroic. It was a valorous attack, but the enemy was not wholly routed, as appears in a call for a meeting to be assembled at the inn of Captain Josiah Shelden in Boston, November 19, "to hear what Mr. Hezekiah Gates hath to offer for an agreement concerning the saw mill and damn." The records of Timothy Green are spelled with great accuracy. He fails now in the orthography of one word. Probably he did not use that word often, but we are sorry to find him using it in this form when he is talking about Gates and the saw-mill. Mr. Hartwell is allowed and some time later was paid £33-3-0 "for sueing Hezekiah Gates; for charges attending Court at Worcester May 1740 and for officers fees and witness fees and for laying out ten acres of pine land and laying out Hezekiah Gates' land." In 1743, after many votes and references to the affair, the proprietors, in a more conciliatory spirit, propose to adjust the difficulty on receipt of £40 or £10 new tenor. The proposition was accepted and payment made by Mr. Gates soon after. Complaint however was renewed in a future year, 1744, in a call for a meeting "to see what the proprietors will do concerning Hezekiah Gates; the saw mill being out of repair and no boards." When the meeting was convened nothing was done about it for the saw-mill and all minor troubles were forgotten in the sorrows and discouragements of the French and Indian War.

1741. Several of the proprietors of Dorchester Canada, compared with the standard of their time, were men of wealth. It is apparent that others were less fortunate. A considerable portion of the taxes which had been assessed from time to time on the rights in the township remained



unpaid, and many demands against the propriety were unadjusted. The embarrassment occasioned by this state of affairs finds frequent expression in the records. Early this year it was voted to sell at auction the land of the delinquent owners, but before the day appointed for the sale arrived, the majority took a more conciliatory course in referring the subject to a committee. It is probable that no sale of land for the payment of taxes was made until 1754.

In the annals of this year should be recorded an important event over which the proprietors had no control. The boundary line, having been adjusted previously by the contending provinces, was run by Richard Hazen in February of this year. A belt of land along the northern boundary of Dorchester Canada, containing nearly one thousand acres, was ruthlessly given to New Hampshire. Overcome by a grief which refused utterance, or sustained by a stoic resignation which commanded silence, the proprietors make no reference to this event for many years.

1742. The annals of this year are somewhat brief and uneventful, and the careless reader might fail to discover the feature of greatest interest. Here is found the first trace of faction among the proprietors. In a call for a meeting to be held at the meeting-house in Dorchester Canada, the first attempt to hold a meeting outside of Dorchester or Boston, appear the names of Caleb Wilder, Joseph Wheelock, Hezekiah Gates, Benjamin Harris, Gardner Wilder, Edward Phelps and Nathaniel Carter. These were the petitioners who caused the meeting to be called and designated the place. Former meetings had generally been called by Thomas Tilestone, Jonathan Dwight, Hezekiah Barber, Samuel Kneeland and others living in Boston or immediate vicinity. The record of the proceedings of the meeting convened in Dorchester Canada is brief: "A number of the



proprietors met at the meeting house in Dorchester Canada and there was objection arose about the calling the meeting and so nothing was done."

Evidently, without consulting the Tilestone party, the same gentleman joined by a few others get a meeting called soon after to be convened at Leominster. Again "there was objection arose" on account of the absence of the clerk "and so nothing was done." It becomes apparent that in the fictitious play of Mohammed and the mountain, the Boston party preferred to be the mountain. A meeting was then called to assemble early the following year at the inn of Mr. Jonathan Dwight in Boston where matters of grave import were considered.

**1743.** At a meeting convened March 31 at the house of Jonathan Dwight, an entertaining proposition was considered and decided as follows :

Voted That the proprietors give encouragement to one person that will settle a Family and Keep a public House with Suitable Entertainment.

Voted That the sum of £100. O. T. be paid to one person that shall build a good and sufficient House — three Rooms on a floor with Chimneys in each Room of it for a House of Entertainment and Barn and provision suitable for to entertain men and Horses.

In order that the bounty proposed might be paid to any person complying with the conditions a tax was assessed at this time, but the money was not promptly collected. Timothy Mossman of Sudbury built a house of entertainment this year, and received eighty pounds of the one hundred pounds which was attempted to be raised. The record will establish this point beyond dispute. Under an article "To do what shall be thought necessary in order that Mr. Timothy



Mossman may have the money paid him which is justly due and owing to him from said proprietors" it was ordered "That the sum of eighty pounds old tenor be allowed and paid to Mr. Timothy Mossman for his service in building a house of entertainment and if there should be peace with France within twelve months that the aforesaid Mossman to have the sum of forty pounds old tenor."

In recognition of faithful service, the sum of twelve shillings per day for seven and one-half days was voted to Edward Hartwell, Joseph Wheelock and Andrew Wilder, a committee "to view out and mark out a road from the meeting house to the west line and that fifty shillings be allowed to each of them for their extraordinary hardship."

1744. At the threshold of a new year stand the waiting heralds of impending war; their messages, borne on the wings of alarm along the unprotected frontier, are answered in hasty preparations for defence. The settlers from the unprotected borders through fear of attack from the Indians are hastening to the older and fortified towns. The proprietors of Dorchester Canada, perceiving that the existence of the settlement was involved, adopted early measures to create a feeling of security. First, they place themselves squarely on the record: "Voted that the proprietors will fortify," and at the same meeting one hundred and sixty pounds was voted to Asher Cutler if he would "build a fortification around his house and receive the soldiers that is ordered for that place and have the province pay for billeting and keep a tavern with good stabling hay &c to the acceptance of the proprietors." Mr. Andrew Wilder was chosen "to view the fortification Mr. Cutler is to build in said township." It is reasonably certain that this contract was annulled. In August following an agreement is made with Jonathan Dwight and Ephraim Wheeler "to build a block



house in said Dorchester Canada and keep a good and sufficient house of entertainment fit both for man & horse and to entertain all soldiers that have or may be ordered to said township & to receive the province pay for their billeting." The consideration for this undertaking was two hundred pounds which was paid them the following year, but no record of any payment to Mr. Cutler is found.

Only two months preceding this agreement with Dwight and Wheeler, Timothy Mossman was chosen "to take care of the meeting house by nailing boards against the windows and doors and prevent the burning of brush near it." It is probable that between these dates Mr. Mossman had left the house of entertainment built the year preceding. Certainly in the following year he was residing in Sudbury. It appears, also, that Asher Cutler was the owner of the Mossman inn when he made the agreement with the proprietors to fortify his house in Dorchester Canada.

In confirmation of this statement there is the record of a deed dated August 10, 1744, of Timothy Mossman of Dorchester Canada conveying the fourteenth and fifteenth first division lots to Asher Cutler of Sudbury. These lots are west of the highway and between the house of Seth P. Fairbanks and the old common. There is also a distinct tradition that this ancient inn was fortified and stood near the site of the Powder House.

At the time Dwight and Wheeler built the block-house Mr. Wheeler was the owner of one-half of the Bluefield or Bellows grant, and it is not improbable that the house built on this grant in 1734 was a part of the block-house built in the autumn of 1744 or the following spring. Enos Jones, who settled on the Bluefield grant about 1762, was accustomed to say that there was a block-house and an inn situated a short distance south from the house occupied by the late Deacon Daniel Jones.



1745-1749. If any meeting of the proprietors was convened, during these five years, no record of it has been preserved. It would be a source of satisfaction to make it appear, upon proof, that during these years of gloom and discouragement to all the frontier settlements our little colony had maintained a continuous habitation in Dorchester Canada. But a knowledge of the fortunes of other settlements similarly situated, the absence of any sustaining evidence and the voices of tradition combine to destroy any such picture and to lead to the conclusion that during a considerable portion of the time the settlement was entirely deserted. If it is true that the fires are suffered to burn low on these primitive hearths, they are not wholly extinguished. In a little while the pioneers return in augmented force and the infant colony grows apace. It was the rest and inactivity of sleep, but not the eternal silence of death; and the little clearings in the forest, the meeting-house and the mill will await them on their return.

Previous to this date, in addition to grants of land to the saw-mill and for other purposes, the proprietors had expended above one thousand five hundred pounds, old tenor, in forwarding the settlement. Substantial progress had been made. Primitive roads had been constructed from Lunenburg to the meeting-house and from thence to the Winchendon line. There was a road of more pretension from the saw-mill to the meeting-house, and the Northfield road extended through the township. A saw-mill and later a meeting-house had been built and the fruit of civilization had been enjoyed in a lawsuit of very fair proportions. Through several clearings in the forest the summer sun warms the earth and paints in livery of green the tender blade. A few houses have been built in the centre of the clearings. The house on Bluefield farm is



established by the records. The owner of the saw-mill was permitted to build his house near by. The house of Mr. Mossman, and the fortified house of Dwight and Wheeler, were completed to the acceptance of the proprietors. But the number and location of the earliest dwellings have escaped record and have faded from the traditions of men.

The original grant of several towns in this vicinity was at very nearly the same time. At the outset it was an even race. The proprietors of Dorchester Canada, manifesting a livelier interest in their plantation by more frequent meetings and more comprehensive action, secured better results and made more progress in a preparation for the future than was made by their rivals. It is probably true that if the building of the meeting-house had been delayed a very short time, it would not have been built until the return of peace after the French and Indian War. Admitting the conjecture, the fact remains—one was built, and it was more than twenty years before a similar edifice was reared in Rindge or in Winchendon.

The fear of attack from the Indians which led to the desertion of the settlement was not without good and sufficient reason. Any other course would have been rash and venturesome. A view of the surroundings as they were in 1745 leads directly to this conclusion. Townsend, including the greater part of Ashby, and Lunenburg were incorporated towns containing several block-houses on which the inhabitants relied for protection. The settlement in Westminster had made substantial progress, containing about twenty families. In that town was a line of ten block-houses or fortified dwellings which, joining with the fortifications in Lunenburg and Townsend, made a continuous line of defences on the south and east, with Ashburnham on the outside doing picket duty for the older and fortified towns.



There was no protection from the north and west. In this direction, between the lines of settlement along the margins of the Connecticut and Merrimack rivers, was an expanse of unbroken wilderness through which an insidious foe could approach unchallenged. The only settlements on the danger side of Ashburnham were at New Ipswich, Peterborough, Rindge and Winchendon. All these were deserted. It would have been foolhardy for any of them or all of them in alliance to have attempted to maintain an existence during these years of danger. History commends the wisdom of the course pursued by these unprotected and feeble settlements. It is a well-established fact that the Indians were discovered many times lurking along the line of the garrisons and ready to attack any unguarded point. They were held at bay only by the active measures taken for defence. They even entered Westminster and Lunenburg and in a part of Lunenburg now in Ashby, they burned one of the fortified houses, killing two of the three soldiers who had been stationed there and carried into captivity an entire family, consisting of John Fitch, his wife and five children.

The Indians made their retreat and doubtless came through Ashburnham. Electing between retreat and massacre, these settlements were abandoned. Even within the fortified line there were expressions of fear and repeated calls for assistance. July 8, 1748, three days after the capture of John Fitch, fifty-eight citizens of Lunenburg and Leominster join in a petition for more soldiers "for the protection of their lives," giving as a reason for their request "that we are soried to look upon ourselves in a very hazardous as well as distressed case to such a degree that we cannot many of us labor on our farms or abide in our houses with tolerable safety." Four days later the commissioned officers and the selectmen of Lunenburg renew the request



for help declaring that for the past week "almost daily the enemy are heard shooting in the woods above us." In the accumulated evidence of these and other documents which care has preserved and research brought to light is found the danger which led to the abandonment of our little settlement and which raised alarm in the older and stronger towns.

During this period of suspension in the affairs of Dorchester Canada, material changes occurred in the membership of the propriety. Thomas Tilestone died October 21, 1745. No other name has become so familiar. He was the leading petitioner for the grant and was appointed by the General Court on the committee to admit the grantees and also to conduct their organization. Subsequently he was elected moderator of every meeting of the proprietors, was named on the most important committees and until his death, at the age of seventy years, he was the leading spirit among his associates. He was a son of Timothy Tilestone and was born in Dorchester October 19, 1675. Through a long and useful life he was called to many positions of trust, both in civil and military affairs. His name is honorably connected with the annals of his time. In the concerns of Dorchester Canada, he was succeeded by his son Elisha Tilestone, who from inclination or otherwise made no attempt to exercise an equal influence in the management of its affairs.

Joseph Wilder of Lancaster was a member of the Council in 1735 and was one of the committee to admit the grantees. At first he was prominent in the councils of the proprietors, but occupied with affairs of greater moment his name now fades almost entirely from these annals. He was Judge of Probate many years and one of the Justices of the County Court from the organization of the county in 1731 until his death in 1757. It was his son Joseph who was one of the



surveyors of the first division lots in 1736. Another son Caleb and a cousin Oliver continue active members of the propriety for many years, and among the residents who appear at a later period the name of Wilder will receive honorable mention.

Edward Hartwell was one of the first settlers of Lunenburg where he continued to reside until his death February 17, 1785, aged ninety-six years. He continues a proprietor of Dorchester Canada, but after this date he gives very little time or attention to its affairs. His sound judgment and vigorous intellect made him a leader among men. He was a major in the militia and was frequently in service in the protection of the frontier. For many years he was a member of the Legislature and served in that capacity after he was eighty years of age. He was also one of the Justices of the County Court from 1762 to 1774. In the midst of these accumulating honors and with weighty responsibilities resting upon him, he is found clearing the roads in the new township seven and one-half days and is rewarded with a gratuity of fifty shillings on account of his extraordinary hardship.

On the muster-roll of Captain Withington's company which served in the expedition to Canada in 1690 appears the name of Samuel Hicks. The son Samuel, Jr., being dead a right in the township of Dorchester Canada was awarded to Timothy Mossman of Sudbury who married Sarah Hicks a daughter of Samuel, Senior. Mr. Mossman was the only one of the sixty original proprietors who settled in the township. Driven away by fear of the Indians and being advanced in years, he did not return when the settlement was renewed but the name will ever be associated with the earliest annals of the place. While he resided here, as stated elsewhere, he owned and occupied a house and lands



a short distance south of the common. From a petition found in the forty-sixth volume of State archives it appears that Mr. Mossman had a lease of other land and that potash was manufactured there at a very early date.

The petition of Timothy Mossman which humbly craves leave to show that your petitioner lived in Dorchester Canada and was drove off by the Indians from that town, and thereby I lossed my House Moveables and Improvements and being impoverished sold my land there. I was put in possession of the pottash farm by virtue of a Lease from Capt Plaisted, where I did much labour in fencing improveing and makeing roads to the value of Two Hundred pounds where a so I met with Great sickness in my person & familly and was further reduced by the loss of the possession of the province land as it became profitable.

Therefore I pray your Excellency and Honours from your own goodness and Humanity to Compassionate my distress'd Circumstances and forgive me the debt I owe to the Province and give me a small Tract or Tracts of Province Land that may be found to Lye betwixt Westminster and Leominster that is useless to the Govern<sup>t</sup> or the Sum of Two Hundred Pounds or Equivalence in land, and as in duty bound shall ever pray.

TIMOTHY MOSSMAN.

In answer to this petition of Mr. Mossman, the General Court ordered June 12, 1764, "that the sum of twelve pounds, being a debt due from the petitioner to the province, be remitted to him in full answer to his petition."

The second allegation in the petition concerning the potash works under the lease of Captain Plaisted relates to events which occurred after his removal from this town. To Thomas Plaisted had been granted fifteen hundred acres of land, now a part of Princeton, and while Mr. Mossman was occupying this grant in 1760 the title was forfeited on account of non-fulfilment of the conditions. It is this misfortune that is recited in the petition. Timothy Mossman was born in Wrentham, 1679, and died in Sudbury, 1773. He did not reside in this town subsequent to 1744.



## CHAPTER III.

### A RECORD OF SETTLEMENTS.

RENEWED ACTIVITY OF THE PROPRIETORS. — MOSES FOSTER. — THE SECOND SAW-MILL. — GRAIN-MILL. — SETTLEMENTS. — DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN RESIDENT AND NON-RESIDENT PROPRIETORS. — NAMES OF EARLY SETTLERS. — THE GERMAN SETTLEMENT. — THE PROVINCE LINE. — MANUFACTURE OF POTASH. — DISTRIBUTION OF UNDIVIDED LANDS. — FAREWELL TO THE PROPRIETORS. — PERSONAL NOTICES.

THE CONGRESS of nations convened at Aix la Chapelle, in 1748, effected a suspension of hostilities between England and France, but during the summer of the following year, detached bodies of Indians, sometimes accompanied by a few French soldiers, continued to menace the exposed line of settlements. Not until 1750, did a feeling of security invite a return of the settlers to the frontiers, nor at this time in any considerable number. One by one the hardy pioneers break an opening in the wilderness or enlarge a clearing already begun. The rude cabins are separated by wide wastes of unbroken forest. The cheering presence of a new arrival, or the return of a former companion is only hailed at long intervals of time. It was several years before there were many settlers in the township. The renewal of the war in 1754, and the news of sudden incursions by the Indians into Salisbury, Charlestown, Walpole, Keene, Hinsdale and other towns in New Hampshire, continued to cast clouds of discouragement over a second attempt to possess the township. While this state of affairs from 1750 to



1760 greatly retarded, it did not prevent material progress in the settlement of Dorchester Canada.

Early in the year, 1750, the proprietors, aroused by the bustle of preparation heard on every hand, are convened at the inn of their old associate, Jonathan Dwight. For five years they have beheld their possessions in Dorchester Canada, through the dim vision of gloomy fear and fading hope, but now assembling with cheerful countenances, they forget the misgivings of the past as they read on every hand the accumulating promises of amended fortunes. They cannot fail to note the vacant chair of Timothy Tilestone. Joseph Wilder, engrossed by affairs of greater moment, has withdrawn from any participation in their affairs, and Edward Hartwell, after this date, is seldom present. In their room come Elisha Tilestone, Richard and Caleb Dana, Henry Coolidge, Eleazer Williams and John Moffatt, while the Sumners, Colonel Oliver and Captain Caleb Wilder, Jonathan Dwight, Hezekiah Barber, Joseph Wheelock, Nathan Heywood and others, whose names are familiar, will continue active members of the board. And last, but not least, from year to year there will be added to their councils new members, residents of the settlement, increasing in numbers and influence until they gain control of the corporation. These, in whom we have much the greater interest, will be introduced with honorable mention as they make their appearance at the meetings of the board.

The date of the first meeting after the long interval, was February 20, 1749-50. It was proposed to procure windows and finish the meeting-house, and the expediency of calling a minister was suggested for the first time, but nothing was decided in regard to a minister or the meeting-house. A committee was named to report at the next meeting concerning the probable expense and the location of a grist-mill, and



then, with their accustomed alacrity, they admonished Mr. Gates instructing him in specific terms, to keep the saw-mill in good repair and to "raise the dam one foot and a half higher than it used to be or ever has been." After some attention to the roads, which doubtless needed mending, the proprietors directed attention to one subject of no little interest. Present at this meeting, and mingling with them, was Moses Foster, then almost sixty years of age. For several years he had resided a portion of the time, at least, in Dorchester Canada. He brought them tidings from the wilderness, and gave them an account of what had happened there. By him they were assured the meeting-house had been unharmed and he gave them the names of those who had been to the wilderness or were proposing to settle there. Mr. Foster had purchased one first and one second division lot lying adjacent in the northeast part of the town, now in Ashby. The title to one of the lots was in dispute and the proprietors at this meeting made him a grant of fifty acres. Not content with this measure of kindness to their aged guest, the proprietors vote him five pounds "for being one of the first settlers." There is no record of the payment of this gratuity, but a few years later a tract of about fifty acres was granted to "Mr. Moses Foster one of the first settlers" on condition he "shall come personally and settle and inhabit there and continue there for several years provided his life be spared him." This grant was located adjacent to and east of the common, and for many years was known as the Deacon Foster grant. It is now owned and occupied by Benjamin Cushing. Permission was also given Mr. Foster to throw up his house lot No. 51, and lay out another which he did, selecting a tract extending north from the land granted to him, but not extending so far westward.



At this time occurred a radical change in New England in the terms employed expressing money. In 1736, the paper money, styled old tenor, compared with silver was worth about one-third of its nominal value. It gradually depreciated, until in 1750 the bills issued by Massachusetts were rated at about fourteen per cent. In 1749, England sent to the New England colonies in compensation for the cost of the recent war a large amount of specie. The proportion of Massachusetts, amounting to \$612,330.41, was employed in redeeming the issue of paper money at current rates. After this date when a sum of money is stated, a pound will represent an equivalent to \$3.33½ in silver. Referring to payments of money previously made, the vote in 1737 to give the laborers upon the roads, seven shillings per day was equivalent to thirty-one cents, and the cost of building the meeting-house was about two hundred and twenty-five dollars. The gratuity tendered Mr. Foster on account of his early settlement, was equivalent to two dollars and twenty-five cents. In 1751, measures were adopted which led to the building of a new saw-mill. In order to accomplish this desired result, the proprietors first declare their independence of Mr. Gates and his mill, and then, in the light of a discovery, come to the conclusion that the former grant of land to him is revoked and can be given by them to any other person or persons who will undertake to build another and a better mill. With the summary retirement of Mr. Gates, the old mill falls into decay, and the temper of the proprietors is reflected with more serenity in the pages of the records. Let it not be presumed that this continued trouble over the saw-mill has been unduly colored in these annals. Only a few of the many complaints of the proprietors have been mentioned, and always with a conscientious effort to temper their acerbity.



The final vote was passed, November 5, 1751.

Voted that the proprietors do hereby grant to Caleb Dana, Timothy Green and Jonathan Dwight and their heirs, the stream of water whereon the old saw-mill was built by Hezekiah Gates, and the ninety acres of land, sixty acres of which are laid out near or adjoining to said stream, which was supposed to be granted to the said Gates. They viz: Caleb Dana, Timothy Green and Jonathan Dwight build a saw-mill and keep the same in good repair three years after said mill and a good dam is well finished at or before the 20<sup>th</sup> day of May next or sooner.

At the same meeting a bounty of forty-eight pounds was offered to any one who would build a grist-mill on the same stream "as near the saw mill as conveniently can be." There were stipulations that, at the saw-mill, work should be done at a stated price and that the grist-mill should be kept in good repair and with good attendance for the term of fifteen years. It was proposed in April, 1752, to make a further grant to encourage the building of the grist-mill and the subject was referred to the next meeting with the encouraging remark "by which time the grist-mill will be finished." Stimulated by these proceedings a new saw-mill and a grist-mill were soon built. Caleb Dana of Cambridge, the owner of many lots of land but never a resident in this township, and Elisha Coolidge, also of Cambridge, who settled at this time in Lane Village, bought of Jonathan Dwight fifty acres of land situated southeast and adjoining the old saw-mill grant. On their new purchase they built a saw-mill and a grist-mill in the year 1752. These mills were near each other and possibly under one roof, and were located nearer the Upper Naukeag than was the old saw-mill. In January, 1753, Dana and Coolidge sold the two mills and the Dwight land to Nathan Dennis of Dudley.



Mr. Dennis removed at once and took possession of the mills and for a number of years Mr. Coolidge remained here. Dana and Coolidge for many years retained possession of the saw-mill grant. For some reason the grant was not confirmed to them by the proprietors until 1760, nor was the gratuity of forty-eight pounds to encourage the building of the grist-mill promptly paid. This delay led to the second lawsuit which attended the fortunes of the settlement. In this instance the proprietors were the defendants and in 1756 paid the successful litigants on an execution the sum of £77-15-2, and about the same time Mr. Dennis, the proprietor of the mills, secured an execution for the sum of £14-15-3. The proprietors, having secured the building of a better saw-mill and a grist-mill for the accommodation of the settlement and satiated with vexatious experiences and the lawsuits attending every enterprise in this direction, now leave their management and the building of other mills to the enterprise of business men. The continued history of mills and manufactures will be found in another chapter.

In regard to the location of the first mills in this town there is little doubt. The mill which was built by Mr. Gates in 1737 was on the saw-mill grant, located on the stream between the Upper and Lower Naukeag lakes. Between the grant and the Upper Naukeag was a lot of fifty acres on which the two mills were built by Dana and Coolidge in 1752. The bounds of these tracts of land are definitely defined and the location of the mills approximately shown by deeds recorded in the Worcester Registry. The first mill was near the lower mill of Packard Brothers, formerly of Elias Lane, and not many years since traces of the old log dam could be seen about twenty yards south of the present dam. The other mills were about sixty yards east



of the mill in Lane Village, now of Packard Brothers, formerly of C. & G. C. Winchester. Traces of the dam, in the present mill-pond, still remain.

Referring the action of the proprietors in regard to roads and to ecclesiastical affairs to chapters devoted to those subjects, there are found remaining many items of interest and information which relate to the progress of the settlement. In the proceedings of a meeting convened in March, 1751, and between the record of two other votes on disconnected subjects is found the following assertion: "Voted that thirty men or upwards residing in the township." This is startling information. Turning to the warrant for an article introducing this vote there is found, "To agree upon a speedy and full compliance with the conditions of the General Courts Grant." The conditions of the charter requiring the settlement of a certain number of families within a limited time had been unfulfilled several years. On account of the troublous times which had retarded the progress of all the younger settlements, the General Court, by tacit consent and sometimes by enactment, had extended in an indefinite manner the time stipulated for the fulfilment of the conditions of the grants. Yet the policy of reminding the settlements of their delinquency was being pursued. The solemn declaration of the proprietors that there were thirty men residing in the township at this time should be qualified. It was not recorded for their own information but was rather addressed to the General Court. If the vote had a desired effect in the quarter to which it was directed, it did not increase the number of settlers. The population of their plantation could not be inflated at will by resolving that the men were there. Only a few families were residing in the township when this startling vote was passed, and any mention of thirty men, if correct, must have included any who were



repairing roads for the proprietors or clearing lots preparatory to a removal of their families; but their existing legal residence and the home of their families were not as yet in Dorchester Canada.

About the time the town was incorporated, and perhaps an incident of that event, there are found renewed evidences of discord between the resident and non-resident proprietors. For several years the meetings of the propriety had been held in Dorchester Canada and in them all there had been opportunity for differences of opinion in the policy which should be pursued in the general management of affairs. The non-resident proprietors in forwarding the settlement were increasing the value of their lands, while the resident proprietors, having a twofold interest in appropriations for roads and other public concerns, would favor larger appropriations and the pursuit of a more liberal policy in the general management of the corporation. By conciliation and sometimes by the postponement of contested measures an open issue was avoided, leaving the proprietors at greater liberty for a contest over the place of holding their meetings. The resident proprietors constantly increasing in number had now maintained the meetings in Dorchester Canada without much interruption for several years. There was no injustice in their claim that the minority and wealthier part of the propriety could come to the plantation to attend meetings with less sacrifice than would attend them in a journey to Boston. At a meeting convened in Dorchester Canada in April, 1765, an unusual amount of business was transacted, including a vote that nothing be done about holding future meetings in some other place. The defeated party on the pretence, real or imaginary, that "they were hindered from giving their attendance by reason of the extraordinary freshets at that time



which rendered travelling thither impracticable," immediately called another meeting. In the warrant for this meeting there was an article providing for the reconsideration of all that was done at the April meeting. They assembled at the meeting-house May 8. On account of a former vote a meeting could not be called elsewhere. In the organization of the meeting Seth Sumner, a non-resident proprietor, was chosen moderator in place of either Elisha Coolidge, Deacon Moses Foster or Samuel Fellows, who had frequently been selected at former meetings. Without a vote on any other question the meeting was adjourned to meet in Roxbury, and having met at that place was adjourned to meet in Boston.

The Boston party continued the meeting over a year, holding by adjournment eleven sessions. They elected Richard Dana clerk in place of Samuel Wilder of Ashburnham who was elected in 1763 to succeed Nathan Heywood of Lunenburg; they repealed all the measures adopted at the April meeting and voted that future meetings should be held in Boston until otherwise ordered. Not until 1771 was another meeting of the proprietors convened at Ashburnham, when Samuel Wilder was again elected clerk and was continued in office until the organization was practically extinct. Benjamin Church of Boston remained the treasurer until 1763 and was succeeded by Caleb Wilder of Lancaster and by Jonathan Samson of Ashburnham.

It is certain that both parties were united in a vote passed a short time before the troubles began. It was proposed, in 1761, to "grant Mr. Taylor any certain sum of money to enable him to build a grist mill in the northeasterly part of said township and it passed in the negative unanimously." On the question of mills and the general policy of having any further connection with them there was the fullest meas-



ure of sympathy and concord. At the previous meeting it was voted to "grant James Colman about one acre and one hundred rods lying between the house where he now dwells and the saw mill yard which belongs to Moses Foster Jr. and Zimri Heywood." The records also declare that such favor to Mr. Coleman was on account of "his good service in said township in promoting the settlement there." This land was in the northeast part of the town and is now in Ashby.

In 1761 the General Court so far recognized the settlement as to impose a province tax upon the lands and inhabitants of the township. The proprietors instructed a committee to apply to the Court for relief. The petition, containing information of interest, is preserved in the Court Records :

A Petition of Joshua Henshaw Esqr. and others, proprietors of the plantation called Dorchester Canada, Setting forth: That in the year 1761 the General Court laid a Tax upon them of £44-7-1. and three yearly Taxes since. That the Lands in such a new Plantation do not yield the produce as in those that are more cultivated, and are subject to early and late frosts, inso-much that the Inhabitants have not been able to raise one half of their bread corn, but are obliged to travel to other places to purchase it. That they are, besides, subject to the ravages of wild beasts, whereby they lose more young Cattle, Sheep and Swine than the value of any Province Tax that could equitably be laid upon them and praying Relief.

THE EARLY SETTLERS. — A complete register of the early settlers of this town cannot now be made. The records in the incidental employment of names present no accurate list and there is no account of an enumeration of persons or of families at any time during the infancy of the settlement. The information which establishes the residence in this town



of the persons hereafter named has been gleaned from many sources. In 1751, when the proprietors informed the General Court there were thirty men or more residing in the township, Timothy Mossman and Asher Cutler had removed to Sudbury, from whence they came, and did not subsequently return. Thomas Gamble, who was here in 1739, had disappeared and in some other settlement was recounting his loss by fire. The man employed by Benjamin Bellows and his associates on Bluefield grant, and to whom tradition assigns the name of Johnson, is not mentioned after the desertion of the settlement in 1744. Ephraim Wheeler of Lancaster who was the managing proprietor of the block-house was frequently here until 1760, but probably never resided in the township.

Moses Foster is found residing here in 1750, but the date of his arrival is not definitely known. About 1750 he removed from the northeast part of the township to land granted him near the old common where he was a licensed innholder in 1751 and in later years. His name will frequently occur in the continued record of the settlement.

James Coleman with a numerous family left Ipswich, Massachusetts, 1743, and the same year united with the church in Lunenburg. He is claimed as a resident of Lunenburg until 1760, but it is certain that he early settled on his land in the northeast part of the township, now in Ashby, and very near if not adjacent to the first clearing of Moses Foster. Possibly when apprehensive of danger he retired within the line of the fortifications and being found a member of the church in Lunenburg, it was erroneously presumed that he was a resident of that place. He was a prominent man in the settlement and was later a valued citizen of Ashby.

Elisha Coolidge came from Cambridge, 1752. He probably assisted in building the mills and for a time owned an



interest in them which he conveyed to Nathan Dennis, December 13, 1752. He was a licensed innholder 1759, 1760 and 1761. He was one of the original members of the church and will be frequently named in the following pages.

Nathan Dennis was from Dudley. He owned the mills and was an innholder 1753 and 1754. He returned to Dudley about 1756.

Jeremiah Foster removed from Harvard and settled on the Gamaliel Hadley farm in 1753. In 1757 he was chosen a committee to repair the roads and subsequently his name is frequently repeated in the records.

John Bates, Benjamin Spaulding and Zimri Heywood were residents of the northeast part previous to 1760. In 1767 they were included within the new town of Ashby.

Thomas Wheeler was here and an innholder in 1756. He was one of the original members of the church, moderator of the second town meeting, 1765, and probably moved away that year.

Moses Foster, Jr., was in Dorchester Canada in 1758 and perhaps came with his father several years earlier. His eldest child died here in 1760. The family removed to Shelburne in 1771. He lived in the northeast part of the town and in 1760 he and Zimri Heywood had a mill there.

Unity Brown was a resident here in 1759, but the date of his arrival is not known. The marriage of Unity Brown of Dorchester Canada and Rebecca Arnold of Shrewsbury August 16, 1759, is entered on the records of Shrewsbury and Lunenburg. He united with the church at its organization but his name is not anywhere found after 1762.

Enos Jones from Lunenburg settled on the Bluefield grant in 1761. He was then nineteen years of age and was not married until several years later. A part of the land owned by him has remained in the possession of his descendants until within the memory of many now living.



Samuel Fellows removed from Harvard, 1762. He settled in the centre of the town and built the first mill on Phillips' brook. It was located just north of the blacksmith shop and very near the site of the shop of Rockwood & Walker that was burned in 1883. With the father came Samuel Fellows, Jr. They removed ten years later to Shelburne.

Samuel Nichols from Harvard bought the mills at the outlet of Naukeag lake which had been owned by Dana, Coolidge and Dennis. In 1777 he removed to Walpole, New Hampshire.

William Whitcomb, also from Harvard, settled on land which was later known as the George Howard farm. For several years he was one of the most active and influential men in the place, but later his name is seldom found in the records. He died here at an advanced age.

Jonathan Samson, like many of the other settlers, was one of the proprietors and had owned a right in the township sometime previous to his settlement on the Merrick Whitney farm in 1762. It is possible he was here before the date given. The birth of his eldest child May 7, 1759, is recorded here, but there is no assertion that the child was born in Dorchester Canada.

Stephen Ames settled east of Rice pond, as early as 1762. He removed from town in 1777.

Tristram Cheney was from Sudbury. He was an active citizen. While he remained no one exercised a more controlling influence in the direction of public affairs. He settled where Horace W. Houston now lives, and in 1774 removed to Antrim, New Hampshire.

William Joyner was probably from Sudbury. He was here in 1763, town clerk 1766, 1767 and 1768, united with the church, 1769, but there is no record of his death or of his dismissal from the church. In 1770 he was not taxed and it is probable he removed late in 1769 or early in 1770.



Ebenezer Conant, from Concord, settled probably near and west of Rice pond. He was residing here in 1763. He was sixty-four years of age at that time. With him came his son, Ebenezer Conant, Jr.

John Martin, Ebenezer Hemenway, Abraham Smith, Deliverance Davis, who settled on the David Russell place, now owned by Mrs. Russell, George Dickerson, Jeremiah Bridge and a few others, arrived here so near the close of the annals of Dorchester Canada that they should be counted among the early arrivals in the new town of Ashburnham.

There is evidence that a few families were residing on the Rolfe, the Starr and the Converse grants at an early date, but there is found no mention of the names.

During the arrivals of the settlers who have been named, the Germans were making substantial progress in the settlement of Lexington grant. They were independent of the proprietors, and except in the sympathies of a new settlement, they were a community by themselves.

Y<sup>E</sup> DUTCHMEN.—The German settlement in the eastern part of the town was a substantial contribution to the intelligence and population of the settlement. These emigrants were educated people, equal in character and ability to their contemporaries in the township. They were in full sympathy with the other settlers in religion, in hatred of tyranny and in zealous defence of their political rights. In the Revolution no portion manifested a livelier interest or contributed more in treasure, sacrifice or service. They had fled from tyranny in their native land and were quick to recognize and resist oppression in any form. The sturdy, frugal, industrious characteristics of the fathers have been renewed in their children. From the first they have been received into full fellowship and admitted on equal terms to all social and public privileges. By assimilation and inter-



marriage, they are no longer a distinct people, yet the impress of this element of the population of the town has been healthful and salutary. There remains an impulse not to mention the German settlers in a separate paragraph and in no manner distinguish them from other members of a cemented common community. The impulse would prevail save from a fear that the omission of particular reference would falsely be ascribed to an indifferent recognition of their character and worth. The events which influenced their settlement in this town are not concealed. They were in Lexington in 1757 and not destitute of money. Their imperfect knowledge of the English language and other reasons, at once apparent, urged them to settle in one community if sufficient land could be found at a convenient point. The town of Lexington offered to sell them one thousand acres of land in a continuous tract. They bought it and came here. If Lexington grant in 1735 had been located in any other place they would have gone there. The deed bears date of December, 1757, and is recorded in March, 1758. The original grantees were Henry Hole, Christian William Whiteman, Jacob Schoffe, Simon Rodamell, Peter Perry, John Rich and John Kiberling. All of these, except Peter Perry, whose name does not appear again, immediately settled on the Lexington grant. At the same time or the following year, Jacob Selham, Andrew Windrow, Henry Stack, widow Constantine and Jacob Barkardst settled near them. John Oberlock and Philip Vorback bought land and resided south of the old common and near the site of Cushing Academy. In 1774, Jacob Wilker removed from Boston to the farm still owned and occupied by his descendants. These were born in Germany, and Lexington grant, where most of them resided, soon became known as the Dutch farms.



John Kiblinger—the name is now written Kibling—first settled in Maine but soon removed to Boston. In 1758, with his wife and three children, he came to Dorchester Canada. He was prominent in public affairs until his death, April 4, 1777, aged about fifty-five years. This family first located north of the Wilker farm, but subsequently they exchanged farms with the Constantines and removed to the farm now of George A. Willard.

Constantine. — This family consisted of a widow and her children, the husband and father having died in Boston a short time previous to their removal to this town. She died April 25, 1782, aged nearly eighty years. Jacob Constantine, a son, married July 5, 1773, a daughter of Christian William Whiteman. He died from injuries received by being thrown from a bridge in Ashby, March 8, 1814, aged sixty-one years. As previously stated, this family finally settled on a farm still associated with the name and situated north of the farm of Joseph W. Wilker.

Christian William Whiteman, or Whitman, settled on the farm now of Warren E. Marble. He was an active, intelligent man. In this family there were six children, three of whom were born in this town. In 1796, the aged parents removed to Haverhill, New Hampshire, where one of their sons was then residing.

Jacob Schoffe resided near the Whitemans until 1777 when he removed to Haverhill, New Hampshire. While he remained, his name receives honorable mention in the records.

Henry Hole assumed the name of Hall. He was forty years of age at the time he settled on the Captain Lemuel Whitney farm now owned by Levi E. Flint of Ashby. He died in this town 1794, aged eighty-three years. His eldest son was born on the ocean.



Simon Rodamell had a farm near the home of Jacob Schoffe. In 1777 he presented letters of recommendation from a Lutheran church in Germany and was admitted to the church in this town. In later years the name has been changed to Rodimon. He died 1813, aged ninety-three years.

John Rich, one of the early German settlers, was an active citizen while he remained in the township. He was living in Ashburnham in 1774, but previous to 1778, he removed to Haverhill, New Hampshire.

Andrew Windrow. — To end a season of discontent concerning his German name, he found a glorious summer in the name of Winter. His farm was northeast from the centre of the town. He died November 22, 1792, aged seventy years. His widow died 1814. Andrew Winter, Jr., resided on a farm that was annexed to Ashby in 1792.

Jacob Selham resided on the borders of the German settlement. When Ashby was incorporated, he was included in that town. The name was changed to Sellenham. He died 1769, aged sixty years. His son, Henry Sellenham, is frequently mentioned in the records of Ashby.

Henry Stack, later known as Steele, is said to have been buried in this town. No record of his death has been discovered.

The Lexington grant was originally purchased by Henry Hall, Christian William Whiteman, Jacob Schoffe, Simon Rodamell, Peter Perry, John Rich and John Kiblinger. Peter Perry immediately sold his interest to his associates and the land was divided among them. James Locke of Townsend, later of Ashby, was employed to survey and divide the land into lots. About one hundred and fifty acres of meadow were reserved as common lands and the remainder was divided into fourteen lots of unequal areas.



In the distribution of land among the six remaining proprietors, to Henry Hall was assigned a lot in the northeast corner and a lot near the centre of the south line. Christian William Whiteman received a lot on the east line, south of the first lot of Mr. Hall, a lot near the centre of the north line, and a small lot near the centre of the west line. Jacob Schoffe took a lot near the centre of the east line and south of Mr. Whiteman's first lot, and a lot of irregular outline in the southwest corner. John Rich became the owner of a lot on the east line south of the first lot of Mr. Schoffe and a generous lot in the centre of the grant. To John Kiblinger was given a lot in the southeast and another in the northwest corners of the grant. To Simon Rodamell was awarded two lots near the centre of the grant, one north and one south of the lot of Mr. Rich and a small lot near the centre of the west line between lands of Mr. Whiteman and Mr. Schoffe.

THE PROVINCE LINE.—The boundaries of Dorchester Canada were established in January, 1736. Five years later the province line was run which severed a considerable tract of land from the township and gave it to New Hampshire. Allowing for a variation of the needle, the province line was run north  $80^{\circ}$  west, while the northern boundary of the township was located north  $78^{\circ}$  west. The difference between the town course across the township would lead to a divergence of about one hundred rods. The province line entered Dorchester Canada about ten rods south of the northeast corner and passing westward, cutting wider and wider, it severed one hundred and ten rods at the northwest corner. The detached area was two thousand three hundred and forty rods in length with an average width of sixty rods, amounting to eight hundred and seventy-seven acres. In the northeast corner of the township there had been laid out twelve second division lots which were clipped



by the province line. On the northern side of the township no other lots had been laid out. Through the remainder of its course the province line took tribute from the undivided lands. By subsequent grants, the proprietors make restitution to the owners of the mutilated lots, but their loss from the common land was never compensated. Twice they chose a committee to petition the General Court for remuneration, and as late as 1764, they voted to have the claim revived. It had been delayed too long. The era of grants was ended. In the prosecution of this claim the proprietors joined another which arose from the inadequate allowance for the ponds in the original survey of the township. The proprietors informed the General Court that the allowance of three hundred acres which was then made was an error at once apparent, as indeed it was. They submitted an estimate of the several ponds in the township made by Caleb Wilder and Nathan Heywood. This ancient reference to the ponds is of interest :

The Great pond in Dorchester Canada that the mill stands on [Upper Naukeag]	680 acres
In the Lower Manockeeg	330 "
the long pond by mount Hunger hill	270 "
In one of the great Watatock ponds	70 "
In the other " " "	30 "
In one of the little Watatock ponds	30 "
In the pond by the third Division School Lot	80 "
The pond in the Southwest corner of the township	100 "
That part of the Menomanack lying in Dor- chester Canada	100 "
Taken off by the Province line from Dor- chester Canada	877 "

In these statements it was claimed that the proprietors had lost one thousand three hundred and ninety acres on



account of the ponds and eight hundred and seventy-seven acres by the establishment of the province line.

The contributions of land to Ashby and to Gardner, when those towns were incorporated, will receive mention hereafter. The northeast corner of the original township before it suffered any dismemberment was about two miles east of the present bound. The southwest corner was at Gardner Centre. The northwest corner was within Monomonoek lake, in Rindge. In the estimate of losses exhibited to the General Court there is an error of one hundred acres. That part of Monomonoek lake which fell within the limits of the old survey is reckoned a part of eight hundred and seventy-seven acres cut off by the province line and is also included in the losses on account of the ponds.

THE MANUFACTURE OF POTASH. — One hundred years ago potash was made in all the new towns, and for obvious reason the business was continued until the supply of ashes became limited. A sketch of Ashburnham found in Whitney's History of Worcester County, 1793, contains the assertion, "here are potash works and have been from its infancy; and the first complete ton of this article carried into market was from Ashburnham." It is probable that this sketch was contributed by Rev. Dr. Cushing. The authorship is reflected both in the substance and in the manner of expression, and many of the details are repeated in nearly the same words in his Half Century Sermon, twenty-five years later. Dr. Cushing never wrote carelessly and the statement can be accepted without qualification. The earliest reference to this manufacture appears in a vote of the proprietors, 1753, offering to Benjamin Frobisher one right of land in the township, whenever he commenced the manufacture there and gave four shillings, old tenor, for each bushel of ashes delivered at his place of business. The



price named was equivalent to nine cents in silver. At a later meeting, a committee was instructed to purchase a right of land for this purpose at an approaching sale of land for the payment of taxes. Subsequently, it was proposed that the proprietors agree to deliver 3000 bushels each year at  $6\frac{1}{2}$  pence, or near  $8\frac{1}{2}$  cents per bushel. The grant of land to encourage this enterprise was never made, nor is there any evidence that Mr. Frobisher ever located in the township. It is more probable that this enterprise in its infancy was encouraged by Caleb Wilder of Lancaster, a man of ability and enterprise. He was one of the proprietors of Dorchester Canada, and exercised a controlling influence in its affairs. He was engaged in the manufacture of potash in several places, and was the first to employ kettles in forwarding the process of evaporation, and it was here he manufactured that historical ton of potash, at that time the largest shipment that had been made at one time. One of the early and longest continued works of this character was situated nearly opposite the No. 1 school-house. The water for the leaches was conveyed from a spring not far from the Powder House. At this place Joseph Jewett and Ivers Jewett manufactured large quantities of potash. The works were under the supervision of John Woods. Captain Lemuel Whitney and several others were engaged in this manufacture until a comparatively recent date.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF LANDS.—Very early in the proceedings of the proprietors, the first division lots of fifty acres and the second division lots of eighty acres were laid out and became the private property of the several proprietors. Exclusive of the six grants within the township, over which the proprietors had no control, the undivided land, comprising nearly two-thirds of the township, was the common property of the corporation. Passing over many



votes and the selection of committees to lay out additional lands which produced no results, the first substantial accomplishment was in 1762, when a third division lot of eighty acres was assigned to the owner of each right. A few of these lots were assigned previously but there was no general distribution until this date. A fourth and a fifth division soon followed. The last were called equivalent lots, for the reason that the more valuable ones were given to the persons who had drawn inferior fourth division lots. After these distributions of land, there remained about twenty small tracts of land in different parts of the township, including five islands in Upper Naukeag. These remained common property until an auction sale in 1781. At this sale a tract of fifty acres was purchased by Rev. John Cushing. This was the original number 51 in the first division which the proprietors allowed Deacon Moses Foster to relinquish and lay out another lot bearing the same number a short distance northeast of the common. The great island was sold to Edward Withington and the four smaller islands were purchased by Timothy Fisher. The common lands were the capital of the corporation of the proprietors, and when this was all disposed of the organization was dissolved. The owner of each right in the township had received five tracts of land and had been required to pay one-sixtieth of all the taxes assessed from time to time. When the remaining lands were sold and the debts liquidated, there was remaining in the treasury a sum of money which was divided among the proprietors, and on each right was paid £2-10-2. From a financial stand-point, if the value of the land and this insignificant dividend exceeded the amount of taxes assessed from time to time, the enterprise was successful. But in forwarding and solidifying the settlement, in extending the fruits of organization, and in their agency in the control of



public affairs the proprietors were inspired by loftier purposes and nobler aims.

The following table presents a list of the owners of the several rights when the propriety was organized and the first division of lands was made. Compared with the list in Chapter II., it is found that sixteen persons who were admitted as grantees of the township had sold their interest in the grant previous to the early meetings of the proprietors. The right-hand column gives the name of some subsequent owner of the same right. Five rights were continued in the same name throughout the existence of the organization. In some instances a right was owned by several persons in succession. In filling the right-hand column in such cases, the name of the person in whose possession the right remained the longest time has been selected.

This list of proprietors introduces many names, which became intimately associated with the continued history of the town. Zimri Heywood, Ebenezer Conant, Jonathan Samson, Samuel Fellows, James Coleman, David Taylor, James Spaulding, Nathan Melvin, John Bates, Jonathan Gates, Nathan Dennis, Elisha Coolidge, Moses Foster, Josiah Wilder, Jonathan Winchester, Stephen Ames and David Clark were well-known resident proprietors. Many of the non-resident proprietors were succeeded by their sons who subsequently occupied the lands acquired by inheritance. Among this class the families of Wilder, Stearns, Kelton, Dana and Crehore are conspicuous.

The families who settled on any of the six minor grants do not appear in these records of the proprietors, and not until the act of incorporation did they constitute a part of the body politic.



ORIGINAL PROPRIETORS.	FIRST DIVISION.	SECOND DIVISION.	THIRD DIVISION.	FOURTH DIVISION.	EQUIVALENT LOTS.	LATER OWNERS OF THE SAME RIGHT.
Timothy Mossman,	1	35	31	7	32	Zimri Heywood.
Elisha Tilestone,	2	45	18	39	12	William Babcock.
William Cooper,	3	49	57	23	35	Joshua Henshaw.
Andrew Wilder,	4	24	36	12	55	William Scott.
Edward Sumner,	5	29	51	60	13	Samuel Sumner.
Joseph Triscott,	6	47	2	18	45	John Moffatt.
John Swift,	7	20	17	53	19	Eben'r Conant.
Ministry,	8	11	16	62	62	
School,	9	12	15	63	63	
Hezekiah Barber,	10	58	6	55	21	Caleb Dana.
Samuel Blake,	11	17	40	17	43	John Moffatt.
Edward Hartwell,	12	14	5	14	60	Jonathan Samson.
Thomas Wilder,	13	41	7	54	20	Recompense Wards- worth Stimson.
Joseph Weeks,	14	56	48	56	22	do do do
Josiah Baker,	15	42	38	44	24	Samuel Fellows.
Ebenezer Crane,	16	22	52	48	6	William Bowdoin.
Hezekiah Barber,	17	18	62	47	7	James Coleman.
Joseph Warren,	18	3	30	20	42	Samuel Fellows.
Isaac Royal,	19	52	50	16	32	Samuel Fellows.
Timothy Tilestone,	20	8	42	28	23	— Gordon.
Isaac Royal,	21	43	59	42	17	Caleb Dana.
Matthias Evans,	22	4	12	50	10	— Griggs.
John Andrews,	23	30	63	21	36	David Taylor.
Thomas Tilestone,	24	2	45	9	26	Caleb Wilder.
Nathan Heywood,	25	37	14	15	31	Caleb Wilder.
Joseph Wilder, Esq.,	26	7	27	31	38	Caleb Wilder.
Benjamin Bird, Jr.,	27	26	43	49	9	James Spaulding.
Ralph Pope,	28	57	21	11	46	Ebenezer Pope.
Humphrey Atherton,	29	31	28	30	30	Nathan Heywood.
Nathaniel Blake,	30	33	22	32	40	Isaac Stearns.
James Mears,	31	40	8	26	51	Samuel Dwight.
John Crehore,	32	6	39	6	50	John Crehore.
Isaac How,	33	23	19	61	61	Isaac Stearns.
Robert Redman,	34	5	34	33	18	Isaac Stearns.
Thomas Tilestone,	35	39	33	52	33	Nathan Melvin.
Thomas Tilestone,	36	60	29	36	5	Caleb Dana.
Oliver Wilder,	37	32	46	46	41	John Bates.
Benjamin Sumner,	38	53	11	5	49	Benjamin Sumner.
Joseph Wheelock,	39	16	1	19	3	Jonathan Gates.
Ebenezer Clapp,	40	59	13	10	57	Benjamin Hammett.
John Shepard,	41	9	37	4	48	Oliver Wilder.
William White,	42	55	9	41	56	Caleb Dana.
Samuel Henshaw,	43	1	25	40	28	Caleb Dana.
William Cooper,	44	28	41	43	8	Alexander Hill.
Nehemiah Clapp,	45	25	10	35	2	Nehemiah Clapp.
Jonathan Dwight,	46	63	3	1	34	Nathan Dennis.
Edward Kelton,	47	50	47	34	11	Heirs.
Samuel Butt,	48	44	20	3	47	Elisha Coolidge.



ORIGINAL PROPRIETORS.	FIRST DIVISION.	SECOND DIVISION.	THIRD DIVISION.	FOURTH DIVISION.	EQUIVALENT LOTS.	LATER OWNERS OF THE SAME RIGHT.
Benjamin Jewett,	49	46	61	45	27	Jonathan Gates.
Joshua George,	50	19	4	2	25	Elisha Coolidge.
Robert Cook,	51	36	55	27	15	Moses Foster.
Thomas Lyon, Jr.,	52	48	56	13	53	Josiah Wilder.
Richard Withington,	53	61	44	37	4	Henry Coolidge.
James Atherton,	54	51	58	57	44	Caleb Dana.
Seth Sumner,	55	62	24	51	14	Caleb Dana.
James Swift,	56	21	23	29	54	James Swift.
First Minister,	57	10	53	24	16	Jonathan Winchester.
Bartholomew Gould,	58	13	35	22	37	Moses Burgess.
Samuel Kneeland,	59	54	49	59	1	Samuel Kneeland.
John Robinson, Jr.,	60	27	60	25	59	Stephen Ames.
Thomas Tilestone,	61	15	54	8	58	Benjamin Church.
Thomas Stearns,	62	38	26	58	39	David Clark.
William Sumner,	63	34	32	38	29	Eben'r Hemenway.

Many of the non-resident proprietors were men of influence and character and during their connection with the affairs of this town were actively engaged in other pursuits. One of the most influential and useful members of the propriety was Caleb Wilder. He was a son of the elder Judge Joseph Wilder and a lifelong resident of Lancaster. Owning several rights in the plantation, from an early date until after the incorporation of the town, he continued to exercise a controlling influence in the general direction of its affairs. He introduced the manufacture of potash here and was a leading spirit in all the concerns of the settlement. In 1765 he was styled major and probably held other commissions in this line of service. He was a deacon of the church and honorably filled many positions of trust in his native town. He died June 19, 1776, aged sixty-six years. Two of his sons, Caleb, Jr., and Samuel, became useful citizens of this town. In an eminent degree they reflected the sterling character and marked ability of their honored father.



Joseph Wilder, another son of Judge Joseph Wilder, was born in Lancaster, 1708. He was a surveyor, a magistrate, a colonel in the militia, and after the death of his father he was also one of the Justices of the County Court. He settled in the North Precinct or Lancaster New Grant which was incorporated under the name of Leominster in 1740. Forgetting that Leominster originally was a part of Lancaster, it is sometimes erroneously stated that he removed from Lancaster to Leominster in 1740. While a proprietor of Dorchester Canada, for many years he was also the owner of the Starr and the Converse grants. He died September 12, 1776.

Oliver Wilder was a cousin of Judge Wilder, Sen. An early proprietor, he was frequently named on important committees and after the death of Thomas Tilestone he was often chosen to preside at the meetings of the corporation. Like nearly all the Wilders he was a military man and rose to the rank of colonel. He died March 8, 1765.

Thomas Wilder remained a proprietor but a short time; his right was subsequently owned by Caleb Dana.

The Summers were extensively engaged in buying and selling land in other townships. Seth Sumner was the only one of this name who attended any considerable number of the meetings or was in any way identified with the settlement beyond the purchase and sale of lands.

Caleb Dana was of Cambridge, where he was born 1697, and died April 28, 1769. Becoming a proprietor about 1750, at one time he owned nearly four thousand acres or over one-eighth of the township. He was a magistrate, and at his home and in the councils of the proprietors an active, energetic man. His land in this town was subsequently owned by his son George Dana, who settled here about 1776 and died in this town April 11, 1787.



Richard Dana, a brother of Caleb Dana, resided in Cambridge; born June 26, 1700, and died May 17, 1772. He was a graduate of Harvard University and an able lawyer. Several years he was clerk of the propriety, leaving a clear, ornate record. His son, Francis Dana, and grandson, Richard H. Dana, were men of national reputation.

Henry Coolidge, a brother of Elisha Coolidge, who settled here, owned a right several years. He married a daughter of Caleb Dana and resided in Cambridge.

Joshua Henshaw, Esq., of Boston, as he was styled when named in the records, was probably the same who was elected to the Council in 1768. On account of his patriotism he was not recognized by the royal Governor and was later one of the selectmen of Boston.

Rev. John Swift of Framingham married a sister of Thomas Tilestone. An original proprietor he continued his interest in the township until his death in 1745. In his will he gave to his son, Rev. John Swift, Jr., of Acton, "his right of land in Dorchester Canada," who remained a proprietor until the common lands were distributed. He was admitted a grantee on account of the service of his brother William Swift of Dorchester who perished in the expedition under Sir William Phipps in 1690.

Joseph Wheelock of Lancaster, and after 1740 of Leominster, served on important committees in the earlier proceedings, but after 1760 his right was owned by Jonathan Gates who became a settler.

Rev. William Cooper was pastor of the Brattle Street Church, Boston. He was the original owner of two rights which were subsequently owned by Alexander Hill and Joshua Henshaw.

Isaac Stearns was not a proprietor until about 1760. He was a son of Hon. John Stearns of Billerica where he was



born June 16, 1722, and there resided until his death April 23, 1808. He was a representative, a senator, a magistrate and a most useful citizen. By his associates in the propriety he was held in great esteem and was frequently named on important committees. Two of his sons, Isaac and William, subsequently settled in this town.

With the close of this chapter we leave the non-resident proprietors in the retirement of their homes. Many of the later proprietors became residents and in the following chapters it will appear that the propriety introduced to the town a considerable number of its most valued and useful citizens. The proprietors left the town many legacies. An unwearied effort to forward the settlement had been a constant aim and purpose. The meeting-house, the mills, the division of the town into lots, and an initial system of roads must be placed to their credit. In the proceedings of their meetings the settlers became familiar with method and system which they subsequently called to their aid in the management of town affairs. They left an impress and imparted a character to the settlement that reflects in pleasing lines the worth of the men and the spirit of the organization.



## CHAPTER IV.

### FROM THE INCORPORATION TO THE REVOLUTION.

INCORPORATION. — THE PETITIONS OF THE INHABITANTS AND OF THE PROPRIETORS. — THE NAME OF ASHFIELD PROPOSED. — THE CHARTER. — EARLY TOWN MEETINGS. — ASHEY INCORPORATED. — CONTRIBUTION TO ASHEY. — NEW ARRIVALS. — SALARY OF THE MINISTER. — SCHOOLS. — ABATEMENT OF THE PROVINCE TAX. — REVOLUTIONARY FLASHES. — DEATH OF FIRST MINISTER. — THE COMMON. — TAX LIST 1770. — PRICE OF COMMODITIES. — A POUND AND FIELD DRIVERS. — GARDNER FIRST SUGGESTED. — WARNING OUT.

ASHBURNHAM was incorporated February 22, 1765. In this decisive measure several interests were involved. The concern of the non-resident proprietors in an act of incorporation was measured by its probable effect upon the value of their lands in the township; to the resident proprietors with an equal interest in the value of lands were tendered the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship in the proposed town; there were also a few residents who were not proprietors and whose only interest was of a personal character, and last there were the settlers on the independent grants or farms, as they were commonly called. Nearly all of the last named class were the Germans, who had settled on the Lexington grant. Until the town was incorporated they had constituted a little republic and were as independent of the proprietors as were the inhabitants of the neighboring towns. They built roads within their grant and managed their internal affairs with no intermediate authority between themselves



and the laws of the province. It was the office of an act of incorporation to join and cement these several interests and give to every citizen an equal voice in the management of public affairs. The measure of deliberation and conference which led to a union of these interests in the solicitation for incorporation cannot be determined. There is no evidence of any discord in the progress of these proceedings, yet it is certain that the resident proprietors were the first to propose the measure. Their petition was considered by the General Court as early as June 7, 1763, when it was resolved that the prayer of the petition of the inhabitants of Dorchester Canada to be incorporated be granted, and that they have leave to bring in a bill. At a meeting of the proprietors in May, 1764, it was decided to apply to the General Court for an act of incorporation. Richard Dana, Joshua Henshaw and Caleb Dana were chosen to present their petition. To this committee, Samuel Fellows, Elisha Coolidge, Jonathan Samson and Samuel Nichols were joined to represent the inhabitants. In accordance with their instructions the committee of the proprietors joined by Samuel Nichols representing the residents of the township presented the following petition:

To his Excell<sup>y</sup> Francis Bernard Esq<sup>r</sup> Capt<sup>n</sup> general & govern<sup>r</sup> in chief in & over his Majesty's province of Massachusetts Bay, the Hon<sup>'ble</sup> his Majesty's Council and the Hon<sup>ble</sup> house of representatives in general court assembled at Concord on y<sup>e</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> day of June Anno Dom. 1764.

Humbly Sheweth

The proprietors & inhabitants of that plantation in the county of Worcester call'd Dorchester Canada That its inhabitants are now increased to such a number as in the petitioners humble opinion makes it fiting & Expedient for them to be incorporated into a town. That y<sup>e</sup> s<sup>d</sup> proprietors long since



built a meeting house there for public worship & for y<sup>e</sup> space of four years last past & more have had an able learned & orthodox minist<sup>r</sup> of y<sup>e</sup> gospel settled there whom y<sup>e</sup> petit<sup>rs</sup> have supported hitherto. That y<sup>e</sup> incorporating y<sup>e</sup> s<sup>d</sup> plantation will greatly promote the growth thereof by removing the great and unavoidable inconveniences which they have hitherto laboured under & will continue during their present situation. That for promoting their incorporation y<sup>e</sup> petit<sup>rs</sup> have agreed & voted that a tax of three half pence an acre be laid by y<sup>r</sup> Excell<sup>y</sup> & Hon<sup>r</sup> upon all y<sup>e</sup> lands & farms within y<sup>e</sup> limits & plan of y<sup>e</sup> s<sup>d</sup> plantation, (except y<sup>e</sup> Cambridge farm, parsonage or ministry lands & y<sup>e</sup> school lands) to continue for y<sup>e</sup> term of three years from y<sup>e</sup> 25<sup>th</sup> day of Jan<sup>r</sup> last, sixty pounds thereof to be annually applied for y<sup>e</sup> paym<sup>t</sup> of their minister's salary & y<sup>e</sup> residue for further finishing their meeting house afores<sup>d</sup>, Keeping y<sup>e</sup> public county road there in due repair & for necessary charges.

Wherefore your petitioners pray that the plantation afores<sup>d</sup> with all the lands & farms within y<sup>e</sup> plantation and limits thereof may be incorporated into a town & that y<sup>e</sup> inhabitants thereof may be invested with y<sup>e</sup> like power & privileges that other towns in this province are invested withall. And that y<sup>e</sup> afores<sup>d</sup> tax as agreed upon may be ratified & confirmed. And y<sup>r</sup> petit<sup>rs</sup> as in duty bound will ever pray.

RIC<sup>d</sup> DANA.

JOSHUA HENSHAW.

CALEB DANA.

SAMUEL NICHOLS.

Com<sup>ttee</sup>.

It is prayed y<sup>t</sup> y<sup>e</sup> intended town may be called Ashfield.

The request of the petitioners that the new town be called Ashfield was disregarded by the royal Governor. At that date the nobility of England were frequently complimented in the selection of names for the incorporated towns, and Governor Bernard was greatly inclined to this system



of nomenclature. The town of Ashfield in this State received its name and its charter only four months after the incorporation of this town. In the employment of that name it is asserted that the Governor tendered a compliment to Lord Thurlow of Ashfield, a member of the king's council. It is possible that some of the proprietors of Dorchester Canada who were on intimate terms with Governor Bernard proposed the name with a knowledge that it was one he held in reserve for early use, or with equal probability it may be presumed that with more immediate associations the inhabitants found in Ashfield a fitting name for a town engaged in the manufacture of potash. In either event the suggestion was of no avail. The General Court, with an accommodating regard for an assumed prerogative of the Governor, in the act of incorporation, left the name a blank, which was subsequently supplied with the name of Ashburnham which is supposed to be in honor of John, the second Earl of Ashburnham. It is a good name and consequently better than precious ointment.

It is probable that the settlers had selected their committee in advance, and that they were joined with the other committee by the proprietors in courteous recognition of the fact. Further evidence of conference appears in a vote of the proprietors obligating themselves to pay into the treasury of the proposed town for a term of years an annual tax of three half pence on each acre of land owned by them, provided the other lands in the township were taxed at the same rate. This agreement between the resident and non-resident proprietors, was recognized by the general Court and was made a part of the act of incorporation. An exception, however, was made by the Legislature of Cambridge farm, then owned by the town of Cambridge, and for that reason it was exempted from the payment of the pro-



posed tax. An act of incorporation, with no name of the town inserted, passed both houses of the General Court February 15, 1765, and four days later the engrossed bill bearing the name of ASHBURNHAM was sent to the Governor for approval. The bill was signed February 22, 1765, the day that Washington entered upon his thirty-fourth year. The act creating a town and vesting it with civic powers and privileges, is in the following terms:

An Act for incorporating a new Plantation in the county of Worcester called and known by the name of Dorchester Canada into a Town by the name of Ashburnham.

Whereas the inhabitants of the Plantation called and known by the name of Dorchester Canada labour under many difficulties and inconveniences by reason of their not being incorporated: Therefore for the removal thereof —

Be it enacted by the Governor, Council and House of Representatives, that the Plantation commonly known by the name of Dorchester Canada according to the bounds of the original grant thereof made by the General Court the first day of June 1736 being as follows, viz:

A Tract of Land of six miles square bounding southerly on the Narraganset Township N<sup>o</sup> 2 Westerly on a Township laid out for Tilton and others. Northerly on a township laid out for Ipswich and Easterly part on Townsend and part on Lunenburg. It begins at a Hemlock, the northeasterly corner of the said Narraganset Town and runs West Eighteen degrees South seven miles wanting twenty rods; from thence North twelve degrees East eight miles and two hundred rods; and from thence East twelve degrees South seven miles and one hundred perch; from thence Southerly by said Townsend line one thousand one hundred and twenty rods and by Lunenburg line six hundred and twenty rods to where it first began. And the Inhabitants of the same Plantation together with all the Lands and Farms included within the same boundaries be and hereby are incorporated into a town,



by the name of ASHBURNHAM, and that the same town be and hereby is vested with all the powers privileges and immunities, that any other of the towns in this Province do or may by law exercise and enjoy.

And whereas it is agreed between the Inhabitants of the Plantation aforesaid and the Proprietors of the common and undivided lands there, that a tax of three half pence an acre be laid upon all the land within the same (Excepting Cambridge Farm and the lands allotted and reserved for the ministry, the first settled minister there and the school) for the space of three years from the fifth and twentieth day of January one thousand seven hundred and sixty-four; Sixty pounds whereof to be annually applied to and for the payment of the minister's salary and the residue towards finishing the public meeting house there and for repairing the public roads through the said Plantation from and after the aforesaid twenty-fifth day of January.

Be it therefore Enacted, that there be and hereby is granted a tax of three half pence an acre to be annually levied and assessed upon all the lands in the aforesaid Township (except the lands and farms before excepted) for the term aforesaid and for the uses and purposes aforesaid and that the proprietors aforesaid be thenceforward discharged and free from all further and other taxes and expenses on account of those articles and every of them, unless by order of this Court.

And be it further enacted that Joseph Wilder Esq be and he hereby is impowered to issue his Warrant to some one of the principal Inhabitants of the aforesaid new Town, requiring him to warn the Inhabitants thereof to assemble at the aforesaid Meeting House sometime in the month of March next to choose all town officers by law required for carrying on and managing the affairs of the said town and to assess levy and collect the tax aforesaid.

In compliance with the duty enjoined in the act, Joseph Wilder of Leominster, who was then one of the justices of the County Court, issued the following warrant :



WORCESTER ss. To Dea Samuel Fellows, one of the principal inhabitants of the new town of Ashburnham Greeting: — In his Majesty's name you are required to warn all the Inhabitants of said Ashburnham to assemble at the Meeting House in said town on Monday the twenty-fifth day of this instant March at ten o'clock in the forenoon to choose a Moderator to govern said meeting and to choose all town officers as before recited and to agree how to call meetings for the future.

Hereof fail not and make due return.

Given under my hand and seal this eleventh day of March in the fifth year of his Majesty's reign Anno Domini 1765.

JOSEPH WILDER,

Justice of the Peace.

By the terms of his instructions Judge Wilder was required to issue his warrant to one of the principal men of the place. The mantle of honor fell upon Deacon Fellows. The selection was approved by the town who made choice of the same principal inhabitant to preside over the first town meeting assembled in Ashburnham. William Whitecomb was chosen town clerk, and the principal inhabitants were so numerous that five were delegated to perform the duties of selectmen. They were Deacon Samuel Fellows, Tristram Cheney, James Coleman, John Rich and Jonathan Gates. Jonathan Gates was also chosen constable and Samuel Wilder collector of taxes. For assessors the town chose Samuel Wilder, William Joyner and John Bates. The town had no money, but anticipating future possibilities, Deacon Samuel Fellows was chosen treasurer. For wardens the town selected Deliverance Davis and Jacob Schoffe. The highway surveyors were Stephen Ames, Tristram Cheney, Deliverance Davis, James Coleman and Jonathan Samson. To the office of tithingmen with its solemn obligations the town called Tristram Cheney and John Kiblinger.



Elisha Coolidge was made surveyor of boards and shingles and also of wheat. For deer Reeves the town solicited the watchful attention of Nathan Melvin and William Benjamin. The custody of weights and measures, if they had any, was delegated to Elisha Coolidge. Christian William Whiteman and John Samson were selected for "vewers," an office relating to the division of lands, and then with the choice of Henry Selham and Samuel Foster to officiate as hog reeves, the list of officers was completed. The next meeting was called in his Majesty's name to assemble on the twenty-ninth of April for the transaction of business which could not be considered under the former warrant. Thomas Wheeler, who was not named in the proceedings of the first meeting, was chosen moderator. It was voted to raise six pounds to defray town charges and "fifty pounds to make and mend private ways." For labor upon the roads it was voted to allow two shillings and six pence per day for each man and one shilling and four pence for a pair of oxen. The number of hours was not stipulated. Samuel Wilder, William Joyner and John Bates were chosen to sell the land of delinquent tax-payers, and after a vote to let swine run at large the ensuing year, in a motion to adjourn they secured an equal liberty for themselves. Two other town meetings were called before the close of the year. At the former the town declined to send a representative to the General Court, and at the second meeting Samuel Nichols was chosen collector of taxes in room of Samuel Wilder who was out of town about one year. In June of this year Tristram Cheney and William Joyner certify that they have "perambulated the line between Winghendon and Ashburnham."

With their enlarged privileges under the act of incorporation the settlers were met with heavy burdens in the form of taxes. The land tax for 1764 and 1765, amounting to £255,



a province tax of £30, a county tax £1-11-0, and a tax of £6 to defray town expenses, must have placed them on familiar terms and close relations with the collector of taxes.

Scarcely had the town been organized and the inhabitants become familiar with their new duties and privileges when several families and fifteen hundred acres of land were joined to another township. Ashby was incorporated March 5, 1767, but the proceedings in which the inhabitants of Ashburnham participated occurred at an earlier date. Until 1764 the territory included within the present towns of Townsend, Lunenburg, Ashburnham, Fitchburg and Ashby was embraced by the three towns first named. In 1764 Fitchburg was set off from Lunenburg and at that time included the southern part of Ashby. The incorporation of Ashburnham in the following year did not change boundary lines. Very soon after, Ashby was formed from portions of Townsend, Fitchburg and Ashburnham. Thus John Fitch and others, living in 1763 in the vicinity of the present residence of Paul Gates in the southern part of Ashby, were residents of Lunenburg; in 1764 they were in Fitchburg, and in 1767 they were in Ashby. With bewildering suddenness and without a change of residence they were citizens of three towns and attended town meetings in as many places in this brief space of time. The original petition, for the creation of Ashby, was before the General Court several months before Ashburnham was incorporated. While a part of the petitioners for Ashby were pressing a solicitation to become inhabitants of one town they were included within another. They continued, however, to pursue their original project and joining with the other petitioners an organization was effected and a committee, consisting of John Fitch of Fitchburg, Jacob Schoffe of Ashburnham and James Locke, Jr., of Townsend, was chosen to appear before the General



Court in support of their petition. At a meeting of the proprietors only a few days after the incorporation of Ashburnham a committee was chosen to remonstrate against the loss of the most thickly settled portion of the town. The following year the subject was laid before the town at a special meeting called for that purpose. The petitioners in the northeast part of the town joined by the Germans were a clear majority of the town. Conscious of their power, they proposed to carry with themselves a very considerable portion of the township, including the Cambridge and Lexington farms and all that part of Ashburnham east of a line running from the northwest corner of Lexington farm across the summit of Great Watatic to the province line.

This liberal proposition included a majority of the inhabitants and about one-fourth of the area of the township. Immediately following the record of the meeting is recorded a protest against the measure, signed by Samuel Fellows, Tristram Cheney, Samuel Nichols, Jonathan Gates, George Dickerson, Nathan Melvin, Elisha Coolidge, William Joyner, Samuel Foster and Enos Jones. No reason is found for the absence of the names of Benjamin Whitecomb, Moses Foster, Jeremiah Foster, Deliverance Davis and others who were then living west of the proposed line and who very naturally would be in sympathy with the remonstrants. This proposition, however, was very materially modified by the General Court. When Ashby was finally incorporated only about one-fourth of the proposed area was severed from Ashburnham. Many years later another tract was joined to Ashby, but the original division line between the towns in 1767 left the eastern boundary of Ashburnham almost a straight line, extending very nearly due north from the northeast corner of Westminster to the State line. The corner of the two towns at the State line was very nearly a



mile east of the present corner. In this form the town of Ashburnham remained until after the Revolution, when a second donation to Ashby and the incorporation of Gardner cut off two areas from the opposite corners of the town.

Among the settlers included within the town of Ashby were several town officers who were chosen only three days before that town was incorporated. Captain John Jones, residing on the Amos Wellington farm then in Ashburnham, was a selectman here in 1766 and again elected in 1767. The same year he was chosen a selectman of Ashby.

James Coleman had been elected one of the constables, an office then including the collection of taxes. Notwithstanding the change in town lines, the assessors of Ashburnham committed to him a tax list for collection and in November of the following year "y<sup>e</sup> town voted to Defend y<sup>e</sup> Town Treasurer in a Trial with James Colman for to get y<sup>e</sup> money that was assest in y<sup>e</sup> year 1767 which assessment was Delivered to s<sup>d</sup> Colman to Colect." It is probable that both towns claimed the taxes assessed this year on the estates set off to Ashby and that Mr. Coleman found it difficult to serve two masters. By this change in town lines, in addition to John Jones and James Coleman, Ashburnham lost Thomas Stearns, Zimri Heywood, John Bates, David Taylor, Henry Selham, Benjamin Spaulding, Samuel Derby, Samuel Rice, Levi Houghton and perhaps a few others. Several of these became prominent in the affairs of Ashby. The only German was Mr. Selham whose name is generally written Sellenham in the Ashby records.

Unless there were two persons of the same name, Benjamin Spaulding returned to Ashburnham in 1768 and in 1769 as will appear joined in a petition to be set off to Ashby a second time. Had he succeeded and continued the process he would have whittled away the entire township.



1766. The new names appearing in the proceedings of this year are Henry Hall, John Conn, Zimri Heywood, Moses Foster, Jr., Samuel Salter, Simon Rodamell, Henry Selham and Joseph Perry. Some of these had been here several years but were not named in the records of the preceding year. In addition to the land and province tax, the town raised twenty pounds for town charges and appropriated sixty pounds of the land tax for the support of roads. This year the town also voted not "to choose a man to Represent them at the great and general Court or assembly to be held at Boston on Wensday the twenty eight Day of may Current at Nine of the Clock in the morning." But more mindful of internal improvement, the town voted to build a pound of stone or timber, two rods square inside, to be located near the barn of Christian William Whiteman, but this vote was reconsidered soon after and a pound was not built for several years. The records assert that this year "the town chose Mr. Timothy pane Esquier regeister for the County of Worcester." Mr. Paine was elected this year, leaving us to infer that either the remainder of the county magnanimously concurred in this action on the part of Ashburnham, or that the record is a simple assertion that Mr. Paine was the choice of the voters of this town. The custom of warning out all new arrivals is mentioned in another connection; the names of the men summoned to remove during the first two years of the existence of the town, were Samuel Salter, Joseph Perry, Oliver Wetherbee, Daniel Merrill, Daniel Harper, Timothy Farley, Amasa Turner and George Hewitt.

1767. Early in the year 1767, a special meeting was called to make some arrangements concerning the salary of the minister. When the town assumed control of public affairs, Mr. Winchester had been settled several years. It only devolved upon the town to pay him the amount of



salary stipulated by the proprietors at the time of his settlement. By the terms of the act of incorporation this sum was to be paid out of the land tax. It only remained for the town to conduct the assessment and collection of this tax. The result of this meeting indicates that the only issue raised at this time related to the time when the salary of the minister should be paid. A committee was chosen "to discourse with Rev. Mr. Winchester relating to his salary." At a subsequent meeting the town acted upon the report of their committee by a vote "to pay Mr. Winchester one half of his salary at eight months' end."

The records of this year introduce the earliest reference to schools in a vote to raise eight pounds for that purpose, and voted that "y<sup>t</sup> y<sup>e</sup> school should be a moveing school and to leave it y<sup>e</sup> Select men to make y<sup>e</sup> Quarters where y<sup>e</sup> school shall be Cept. Voted it to bee a free school."

The increasing burden of taxation and the inability of many of the settlers to meet these increasing demands upon their limited resources find frequent expression in the records. In June the town chose John Moffat of Boston, Rev. Jonathan Winchester and Tristram Cheney, to apply to the General Court for an abatement of the province tax. In connection with this effort the following petition was made to the General Court :

To His Excellency Francis Bernard Esq. Captain General and Governor in Chief of His Majesty's Province of the Massachusetts Bay, to the Honorable his majestys Council & the Hon<sup>ble</sup> House of Representatives, In General Court assembled.

December 30 1767

The Petition of the Inhabitants of Ashburnham humbly Sheweth :

That whereas a Province Tax for a number of years Past has been Laid on your Petitioners no Part thereof has been paid, that your Petitioners Labouring under great poverty think them selves



utterly unable To make any such payment, that the soil we Possess is very Stubborn Requiring much hard Labour before any profit can be reaped from it. That the greatest part of your petitioners have been in said Town but a short time and are unable to raise provisions sufficient for the support of our families. And as there is far from being enough produced in the Town to maintain the Inhabitants we have not only nothing to Convert into money; but are at much annual expense for the necessays of Life or be destitute of them; or else contract debts unpayable without the forfeiture of our Lands.

That y<sup>e</sup> growth of y<sup>e</sup> said Town has been much obstructed by y<sup>e</sup> said tax as many persons have of Late gone over y<sup>e</sup> Province Line to avoid a burden which seems so likely to be unsupportable and fatal. That your Poor petitioners are unable to keep our few cattle alive in y<sup>e</sup> winter season without driving a considerable proportion of them out of town for subsistence. That your Petitioners House of Public Worship has lately been struck by a Hurricane and y<sup>e</sup> cost to repare Cannot be less than £30. Lawful money. With all that can be done to said House it must be Re-built in a few years. That the Death of our very worthy Pastor y<sup>e</sup> Reverend Mr Winchester your Petitioners must needs be exerted to a very great additional expence.

Therefore your Humble Petitioners very earnestly beseech your Excellency & Honers to considerate our unhapy circumstances by Removing ye grievous Tax or to Releive us in such way as in your great wisdom you shall Think fitt. And your Petitioners as in duty bound shall ever pray &c.

TRISTRAM CHENEY in behalf of sd Town.

Dated at Ashburnham, December y<sup>e</sup> 23<sup>d</sup> 1767.

The petition was kindly received by the General Court and all the province taxes then due from this town were forgiven. Qualifying the petition with the reflection that it is an argument for effect, it is true, however, that it presents a view of the poverty and distress of a new settlement and



from it we learn much of the situation of the town at this date.

November 30, 1767, the inhabitants were warned to assemble on the tenth of the following month "to see if the town will comply with the town of Boston in not purchasing any of the articles mentioned in the paper sent to the selectmen." The paper referred to was the historic letter of the selectmen of Boston, dated October 28, and sent to the selectmen of the several towns in the province, respecting the sale and use of certain foreign articles upon which Parliament had laid a tax. At the meeting in Ashburnham it was voted "to comply with the request of the selectmen of Boston respecting the articles in a paper they sent to us." Here is found the first and a very early act relating to the Revolution. It was one of a series of events which foretold the approaching storm, truthfully reflecting the progress of public sentiment while the smouldering fires of discontent were being fanned into the flame of open revolt. Other towns actuated by an equal patriotism passed similar votes, but very few of them at this early date were prepared to speak with equal emphasis and promptness.

The death of the first minister occurred this year. A meeting was promptly called at which the town voted to defray the expenses of the funeral and to pay to Mrs. Winchester, a sum equal to the stated salary for the remainder of the year. No item of the expense of the burial of Mr. Winchester has been preserved, but in accordance with the customs of the times, it is probable that gloves, weeds and other insignia of mourning, were procured for the bereaved family and for the bearers. All were mourners and all followed the remains of their beloved pastor to the grave. The measure of their sorrow at the death and their respect for the character of Mr. Winchester were continually reflected in the kind con-



sideration in which they always regarded the widow and the children of their first minister.

1768. This year, Rev. John Cushing was settled. An account of the ordination and of a prolonged and successful ministry will be found in another chapter. Other proceedings of less magnitude complete the record of the year. In the warrant for the annual March meeting appears an article "To see if y<sup>e</sup> town will vote y<sup>t</sup> there shall be no ox sled Drawed in y<sup>e</sup> Privet Roads in Ashburnham less than four feet and a half wide on Penalty such as y<sup>e</sup> town shall think Proper." "Passed in y<sup>e</sup> negative." The highways in this connection were styled private roads to distinguish them from the county roads which had been constructed, and in some measure were under the supervision of the court.

It was also ordered this year that "y<sup>e</sup> Dutch should draw their school money" upon condition it was used for its legitimate purpose.

The increasing discontent of the colony in regard to the continued acts of oppression by the British government, and the promptness in which each infringement of their charter rights was resisted by the watchful spirit of democracy, again invite the citizens of Ashburnham to assemble in town meeting. Immediately following an unsuccessful attempt to persuade the Royal Governor of the province to convene the General Court, letters were sent to all the towns inviting them to send delegates to join in a conference over public affairs. The citizens of this town unanimously instructed their selectmen to send in writing their desire to join with the assembled delegates "in all proper way to defend our rights and privileges which was granted to us in our charter."

1769. It will be remembered that while the inhabitants were thus assembling in town meeting from year to year and



adopting measures concerning the prudential affairs of the town, the proprietors were still an active organization. Under the laws of the province, the town assumed the control of the roads, the support of the ministry and the general management of all municipal concerns, while the propriety, owning the undivided lands, was still an organized corporation. The proprietors surrendered the meeting-house to the town without any formal vote, and in 1770 at a meeting convened in Boston, there was a proposition under consideration to surrender to the town "the meeting house square with the reservation that the whole of it remains a common forever." This subject was dismissed without action and it is possible the proprietors considered that the common already belonged to the town under the title of public domain. If any consideration less friendly prompted the failure to relinquish their claim to the common, the inhabitants of the town had very little concern about it, and were masters of the situation. They had already disposed of one-fourth of it and were holding the remainder with grim complacency. Under an article to see if the town would sell a part of the common to Rev. John Cushing, the town in May, 1769, voted to make him a present of two and one-half acres at the east end and instructed the selectmen to give him a deed.

Benjamin Spaulding, and a few others residing in the northeast part of the town, petitioned the General Court to be annexed to Ashby. The town promptly expressed its dissent and submitted the matter to Samuel Wilder who successfully opposed the measure.

The questions arising in town meeting and the methods of treatment, are continually suggesting the changes which have attended the progress of years. One hundred and twenty-five years ago, as a source of revenue, the town voted that



"every inhabitant that takes cattle to run in the woods shall pay to the town four shillings per head." The same year, not having paid their minister the sum due for settlement, the town borrowed the money of Colonel Caleb Wilder and agreed to pay it in clearing land for him. For several years the town accepted labor on this account in payment of taxes.

1770. The annals of this year introduce very few subjects not anticipated in a general view of a town in the transaction of the ordinary business. The year preceding the town voted not to choose a committee "to see where the town's money had gone." They probably concluded it had never been gathered in, since this year a number of parcels of land belonging to non-residents were sold at auction in payment of taxes. From this source the town realized nearly fifty pounds. One of the purchasers at this sale was Rev. Mr. Cushing, who bought six and one-half acres between the common and Upper Naukeag lake. This year the court had under consideration the location of a county road from Winchendon to Westminster, passing through a corner of this town, now in Gardner. The town of Ashburnham instructed Samuel Wilder to oppose the project and "if need be, to employ an attorney." This road was built soon after, but the part of it within this town was inconsiderable.

In accordance with an act of the General Court, an inventory of the province tax for the year 1770 was returned by the assessors. Fortunately, the original is preserved in the State archives. This rate assessed on the polls had no connection with the land tax. The list preserves the names of the men residing in this town December 14, 1770. The names followed by the figures 2 or 3 paid the tax of as many persons, who might be either sons above sixteen years of age, or young men in their employ. Ebenezer Conant, Sen., was probably residing here at this time; later



in life he was a town charge, but no reason appears for the omission of his name. It was probably accidental. The omission of the name of Rev. John Cushing was probably intentional. The number of names in the list is seventy-four, which would indicate a population of less than four hundred.

John Adams	Moses Foster (2)	Samuel Salter
Stephen Ames	Samuel Foster	Aaron Samson
William Benjamin	Henry Gates	John Samson
Moses Bennett	Jonathan Gates (2)	Jonathan Samson
John Bigelow	Henry Hall (2)	Jacob Schoffe
Nathan Bigelow	Jacob Harris	Benjamin Spaulding
Joshua Billings	Ebenezer Hemenway	Ephraim Stone (3)
Abraham Blodgett	Joseph Holden	Oliver Stone
Isaac Blodgett	Moses Johnson	Jonathan Taylor
Jeremiah Bridge	Enos Jones	Philip Vorback
Peter Brooks	Abijah Joslin	Caleb Ward
Tristram Cheney (3)	James Joslin	Jacob Wenneg
David Clark	Peter Joslin	Oliver Wetherbee
Job Coleman	John Kiblinger (2)	Phineas Wetherbee
Ebenezer Conant, Jr.	Benjamin Kemp	Benjamin Whitcomb
John Conn	Nathan Melvin	Oliver Whitcomb
Elisha Coolidge	Daniel Merrill	Christian Wm. White-
Deliverance Davis	Joseph Metcalf	man
Amos Dickerson	Samuel Nichols	Samuel Wilder (2)
David Dickerson	Simeon Nutting	Hezekiah Willard
Salmon Dutton	John Oberlock	John Willard
Thomas Dutton	Joseph Perry	Oliver Willard
Elijah Edson	Daniel Priest	Andrew Winter
Samuel Fellows (3)	John Rich	Timothy Wood
Jeremiah Foster	Simon Rodamell	Abijah Worcester

**1771.** In addition to specific legislation regarding schools and the meeting-house, which will appear in other chapters, this year the town sold the right of land reserved for the benefit of schools.

From the incorporation of the town to this date there had been little change in the price of labor and many articles of merchandise. The depreciation of the currency a few years later introduced fictitious values in all business transactions. The town at this time continued to allow the selectmen and other town officers two shillings and eight pence per day. The rate of labor upon the highways for several years is



recorded in stated form: "three shilling per day from now to the last of September, one shilling and four pence for oxen and eight pence for a cart and after September two shillings per day." From an account of sales made in an adjoining town at this date it appears that upland hay sold at £1-5-0 per ton, rye at four shillings per bushel and butter from six to eight pence per pound.

1772. "Voted to buy some grave stones in memory of Rev<sup>d</sup> Mr Jonathan Winchester and that M<sup>r</sup> William Whitcomb be the man to get the above stones." This act commemorating, at once, the virtues of the dead and the serious impulses of the town resulted in the erection of the plain slate stone which yet marks the grave of the first minister. Future generations may erect at this grave a monument of far greater pretension, but none can ever express a more fitting devotion to the memory of him whose virtues are inscribed upon this ancient stone in language of sincere respect and love.

1773. Having built a pound the preceding year the town chose Benjamin Bigelow and Jacob Willard to conduct the business at that station. Field drivers, or hog reeves as they were formerly called, have been chosen every year since the incorporation of the town. This year, with a new adjunct to the office, the selection was made with due deference to ability and regard to place of residence. The location of the first pound is not certain. The pound at the southwest corner of the common was not built until 1794, but time and the elements appear to have been unusually active in hastening its destruction.

The manner in which our fathers regarded the obligation of contracts and the attention they paid to their proper fulfilment are reflected in a vote to "advance thirty pounds to the Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Cushing's Sallary to be assessed this year to make



up the Damage in his not giting his Sallary according to agreement."

1774. In prophecy of the political revolution near at hand and reflecting the sentiment of the people a town meeting is called for the first time without invoking the name of the king. In former years the people had been warned to assemble "in his Majesty's name." A meeting was called in September, 1774, in the simple terms, "You are requested to meet." Later the people were warned "in the name of the government and the people of the state of Massachusetts Bay," until the new constitution of the State introduced "the commonwealth of Massachusetts." These terms clearly indicate the progress of public sentiment during radical changes in the forms of government.

The incorporation of Gardner was almost consummated this year. The project was suffered to sleep during the Revolution but it scarcely failed at this time. The petition was signed by residents of Westminster, Templeton, Winchendon and Ashburnham who desired to be included in the proposed town. In answer to the petitioners, the town voted May 23, 1774, that the portion of Ashburnham southwest of a line extending from Samuel Kelton's lot to the lot of William Ames "be set off with portions of other towns to form a new town or district." The line described in this vote is substantially the same as the one established eleven years later. The Revolution caused a delay and introduced a name for the town, but the boundaries first proposed were not materially changed when the town eventually was incorporated.

Commencing with the date of incorporation and extending a few years beyond the limits of this chapter, the town continued the custom of warning out a majority of the arrivals in town. It was a precautionary proceeding suggested



and encouraged by the laws of the province. The statute provided that persons, who were legally warned out of the town, could not gain at once a full legal residence and that in case of extreme poverty the town would not be chargeable for their support. It was a cold reception but modified with a fair understanding that it was a formality of law in which there was often no sincerity. If it savors of inhumanity it was a fault of the law and not of the people. Its practice in other towns led to its adoption here in self-defence. In this connection it should be remembered, that while the sentiment of charity and brotherly love has ever existed in the heart of man, the present system of public charities which embraces all classes of unfortunate men and women of the Commonwealth is the result of more recent legislation. If the early settlers of this town were warned out, they were at once admitted to all social privileges. In some instance men who were warned out were elected to office at the following town meeting and became useful, substantial citizens contributing largely to the intelligence and wealth of a town to which they were so formally received. Not a few of those who served in the Revolution were welcomed in this manner to Ashburnham. In their turn they joined, in a more serious manner, in warning out an army of invasion before it gained a residence on American soil. A few extracts from the records will give a fair idea of the spirit of these proceedings.

TO JONATHAN GATES, constable of the Town of Ashburnham,  
Greeting :

Whereas Joseph Perry and Mary Perry his wife, Joseph Perry, Juner, and Mary Perry and Abigail Perry and Annie Perry, children of Joseph and Mary Perry, Hath lately Come to the Town of Ashburnham and came last from Midway and Came to



the Town of Ashburnham November 1765, whom the Selectmen of Ashburnham Refuse to admit as Inhabitants of the said Town.

THESE are therefore in his majesties name to Require you, the said Constable to warn the persons a Bove mentioned forthwith to Depart out of the town of Ashburnham.

Hereof fail not and make Due return of this warrant with your Doings therein to some one of us the subscribers.

Given under our hands and seal at Ashburnham This Twelfth day of February A D 1766 in the Sixth year of his Majesties Rain.

TRISTRAM CHENEY	} Selectmen of Ashburnham.
JOHN RICH	
SAMUEL FELLOWS	

WORCESTER SS.

ASHBURNHAM, February 24 1766

In obedience and by virtue of the within written warrant I have warned the within named Joseph Perry and Mary Perry his wife Joseph Perry Juner Mary Perry Abigail Perry Annie Perry children of Joseph and Mary Perry, forthwith to Depart out of the town of Ashburnham.

JONATHAN GATES,

Constable of said Town.

In some instances the selectmen made a memorandum of the arrival of a family into town and in such cases no warrant is found.

Olive Davis and Mercy Davis Daughters of Jonas Davis of Harvard Deceased and Elizabeth his wife came into this town October y<sup>e</sup> 14, 1767, and came last from Harvard.

Elijah Edson left Bridgewater June 17 1769 and brought with him Martha Edson his wife and three children Sarah Edson, Oliver Edson and Ziba Edson, whom the selectmen refuse to admit as Inhabitants of Ashburnham.



## CHAPTER V.

### REVOLUTIONARY HISTORY.

SITUATION OF THE TOWN. — THE COVENANT. — WORCESTER CONVENTION. — THE JUROR LIST. — REPRESENTED IN PROVINCIAL CONGRESS. — POWDER AND LEAD. — THE MILITIA ORGANIZED. — PROMINENT CITIZENS INTERVIEWED. — THE SALT PROBLEM. — ALARM AT LEXINGTON. — CAPTAIN GATES' COMPANY. — CAPTAIN DAVIS' COMPANY. — THE SIEGE OF BOSTON AND BATTLE OF BUNKER HILL. — CAPTAIN WILDER'S COMPANY — THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE. — ENLISTMENTS IN 1776. — AN HOUR OF GLOOM. — TOWN PROCEEDINGS. — SOLDIERS IN 1777. — ALARM AND CALL FOR TROOPS. — THE RESPONSE OF ASHBURNHAM. — CONTINENTAL AND OTHER SOLDIERS. — PUBLIC AID. — ASSENT TO THE ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION. — DEPRECIATION OF THE CURRENCY. — THE SOLDIERS IN THE FIELD. — NEW RECRUITS. — CLOTHING FOR THE ARMY. — ALAS, ONE DESERTER. — SOLDIERS IN 1779. — REPRESENTATIVE TO GENERAL COURT. — PRICE OF COMMODITIES. — CONSTITUTION PROPOSED. — THANKSGIVING. — SOLDIERS IN 1780. — TOWN MEETINGS. — OBSERVANCE OF THE SABBATH. — SOLDIERS IN 1781. — BOUNTY PROPOSED. — A FINE REMITTED. — REQUISITIONS FOR BEEF — HOME TRIALS.

THE story of Ashburnham in the Revolution comprehends neither the movements of armies nor the decisive results of sanguinary engagements. The causes of the war, the prevailing sentiment of the colonies and the campaigns and fortunes of the army are subjects of general history. It falls within the province of this chapter to record the names of the men of Ashburnham who were in the service and to present some account of the hardships endured at home. It will appear that the inhabitants of this town were in full sympathy with the patriotic sentiment of the colonies,



and in the field and at the fireside cheerfully bore a full measure of the hardships and burdens of the period. Compared with the older settlements the frontier towns were young and feeble; and, if remote from the earlier discussion of public grievances and from the theatre of war, it is certain they felt every pulsation of the heart of the colonies and responded to every demand.

The population of Ashburnham in 1776 was five hundred and fifty-one. Upon this little community, situated upon the border of the province, the provisional government and the patriotic impulse of the people, during the progress of the war, made heavy drafts for men and treasure. Inured to the privations and hardships of the frontier, the settlements bravely assumed burdens which would have been refused by people less familiar to lives of self-denial and hardships. During the Revolution the strength of the colonies rested in familiarity with poverty and toil. Patriotic impulse and a firm reliance in the righteousness of their cause were important factors, but it required hardihood as well as impulse and endurance as well as principle. A soldiery more tenderly nurtured and less inured to privation might bravely meet the enemy in the field but would have failed in the sufferings of Valley Forge.

Commencing with the beginning of open hostilities the older towns, situated near the theatre of the war, sent an increasing stream of immigration to the frontiers where a more comfortable feeling of security could be enjoyed. During the war all the towns in this vicinity increased rapidly in population. From 1776 to 1780 the population of Ashburnham was increased nearly twofold. The names of many families which are conspicuous in the annals of Ashburnham first appear at this time. All who removed hither were fraternally welcomed and the older resident and



the new arrival, actuated by a common purpose, are found side by side in the army or joined in procuring money and means to carry on the war.

It will appear in the course of this narrative that nearly every man residing in this town and nearly every boy over sixteen years of age were in the service for a longer or a shorter period. The records of Ashburnham do not preserve the names of any revolutionary soldiers. The search for the material for this chapter was made elsewhere. The State archives and the files of the Pension Office at Washington have been fruitful fields of research. It is believed that the following pages will contain the names of nearly all the residents of this town who served in the army during the Revolutionary War. No name has been admitted without unquestionable proof. Tradition and the records are frequently at variance, and in such cases the authority of the records has been accepted.

The winter preceding the repulse of the enemy at Lexington and Concord was a season of gloom and uncertainty. The colonists, and especially those of Massachusetts, were anxiously waiting for the clouds to break or, if inevitable, for hostilities to commence. This era of doubt and uncertainty cast the deepest gloom over the land. The inhabitants of Ashburnham are early found in full sympathy with the prevailing sentiment and with remarkable unanimity are early prepared for the decisive issue. As early as 1773 mention of the situation of public affairs finds expression in an article in the warrant for the annual March meeting, "To see if the Town will consider the general grievances that are laid upon us by acts of Parliament & disposing of our monies without our consent." At this time no action was taken, but in July, 1774, "it was moved that the Covenant sent from Boston be read and accordingly it was read.



Then a motion was made for an alteration and that Doctor Senter, George Dana, Elisha Coolidge, Samuel Nichols and Jonathan Samson be a committee to alter said covenant and adjourned said meeting for half an hour and then said Covenant was altered to the acceptance of the Town." "Voted that Elisha Coolidge Samuel Wilder and Samuel Nichols be a committee to keep the covenant after it is signed."

The covenant adopted in the foregoing vote was a solemn engagement, signed by the inhabitants of the town, that they would refrain from the purchase and use of certain articles of British merchandise, and that risking their lives and fortunes in the defence of their charter rights and privileges, they would resist all officers holding commissions under the late acts of Parliament. On the third day of September, the town was assembled to hear the report of Jonathan Taylor who had been chosen to attend a convention at Worcester, which met in August at the house of Mary Stearns, widow of Captain Thomas Stearns. The records do not afford any information of the character of the report, yet from other sources it is known that this convention recommended the several towns to appoint military officers, to provide arms and ammunition, and to make ample provision for any emergency that may arise. At the same meeting the progress of public sentiment is revealed in a vote to indemnify the officers of the town for not returning a list of jurors as required by an act of Parliament. This was a bold measure and in open resistance of royal authority. The colonists were extremely sensitive in regard to the influences surrounding the halls of justice. The man of lowest degree justly demanded a hearing on equal terms with the favorites of royalty. The existing discontent arose in the fact that the judges were appointed by the crown and provision was made in England for their support for the purpose of rendering them wholly independent



of colonial influence. This system of appointment and salary of the judges received early discussion and firm resistance. The vote of Ashburnham refusing to recognize the courts thus constituted in returning a list of jurors, was a part of the general action of the colony.

Two other important votes were passed at this meeting. First, the town choose Jonathan Taylor, a representative to the famous provincial congress which assembled at Concord, October 11, and by adjournment to Cambridge continued their deliberations until December 10, 1774. Evidently, not yet content with these expressions of opinion, and with these provisions for the future, at the same meeting, nearly a year before Washington assumed command of the army, the town voted "to buy half a hundred of powder and one hundred of lead and ten dozen of flints as a town stock." At this meeting, as stated, the town heard from their delegate the recommendations of the Worcester convention, and ten days later were again assembled to carry them into effect. The action of this meeting was brief yet decisive. A committee of safety and correspondence was chosen and the militia was organized. The record of the meeting preserves the roll of honor.

Chose Samuel Nichols, Jonathan Samson, Deliverance Davis, Abijah Joslin and Jonathan Taylor a committee of correspondence.

Voted that the following persons be the officers of the militia of said town: —

Abijah Joslin, captain.  
Deliverance Davis, lieutenant.  
Ebenezer Conant, Jr., ensign.  
Amos Dickerson, first sergeant.  
Jacob Harris, second sergeant.  
Oliver Stone, third sergeant.



Enos Jones, fourth sergeant.  
Phinehas Wetherbee, first corporal.  
Salmon Dutton, second corporal.  
George Dana, third corporal.  
Ezra Atherton, fourth corporal.  
John Conn, clerk.

This meeting completes the official action of the town for the year and introduces the names of men who will be frequently and honorably mentioned in the following pages. Early in 1775, we find two companies of organized militia, of which Captains Jonathan Gates and Deliverance Davis were commanders, but no record is found of their election or of the resignation of Captain Joslin.

**1775.** At the annual March meeting this year, five selectmen, consisting of John Kiblinger, Samuel Nichols, Captain Jonathan Gates, Oliver Stone and Amos Kendall, were chosen. Through the extended record of proceedings concerning the ordinary town affairs; the gleam of the Revolution is revealed in a vote that Captain Jonathan Gates be instructed to procure thirty-six cartridge boxes for the use of the minute-men at the expense of the town. A former town meeting had been convened early in the month at which town officers were chosen and the usual routine business was transacted. At the second meeting all the proceedings of the first meeting were declared null and void and new officers were chosen who continued in office through the year. The first meeting chose Samuel Wilder town clerk, but at the second meeting Jacob Willard was chosen to transcribe the public records. There is tradition that for a short time in the early stages of the Revolution, Rev. John Cushing, Samuel Wilder, Deacon John Willard, and possibly one or two others, were regarded with some measure of suspicion by the more ardent patriots. It is certain that about this



time a company of men, mainly from other towns, waited upon these gentlemen for an expression of their views on public affairs. Whatever may have been the character or influence of this interview, there was no further question in regard to the political opinions of these men. Mr. Wilder was elected town clerk the following year, an office he held with no other interruption from 1769 to 1792, and all of these men gave a cheerful support to every measure for the prosecution of the war. The population of the town was increased during the year 1775 by the arrival of the following men, most of whom had families: John Putnam, Nathaniel Adams, Peter Willard, Captain Joseph Wilder, Simeon Nutting, Timothy, David and Levi Chaplin, Asa Brocklebank and Jacob Wilker, the first of the name in town.

While this town voted throughout the year not to send a representative to the provincial congress, it is apparent that there was no want of interest in the progress of public affairs outside of the township, since a committee of inspection was promptly chosen "to see that the resolves of the Continental Congress respecting trade be strictly adhered to." To this duty William Whitcomb, Jonathan Taylor, Jonathan Samson, George Dana and Samuel Cutting were assigned. Similar to the action of other towns in this vicinity, Ashburnham adopted early measures to secure and distribute among the families of the town a supply of salt before the channels of trade were closed and many commodities beyond their grasp. A few votes on this subject are transcribed from the records:

Voted to Purchis 300 Bushels of salt for a town stock and chose Messrs. Jonathan Taylor, Amos Kindall and Samuel Foster to bee a committee to percure the same. Allso said committee is to give security in behalf of said town for said salt. Said town



to allow Mr. Amos Kindall, 18 shillings for going down to procure said salt.

Voted that the committee apply to the town Treasurer for money to Bair the charges of teams.

At a subsequent meeting :

Voted that the committee Employed to git the Salt take the same under their Cair and sell to each man as they think his portion is for the space of six months from the first of July 1775, and no longer. N. B. After the time heir prefixed said committee may sell the salt to any person or persons in town or out.

Having given some account of the proceedings at home, the principal events in the history of Ashburnham for the year 1775 remain as yet untold. The town, if remote from the early scenes of hostilities, bore an honorable part in the alarm at Lexington, the battle of Bunker Hill and the subsequent siege of Boston.

Thus far we have discovered some of the steps which mark the progress of public opinion. The evidence of a firmer faith and a more resolute purpose, leading to the sterner scenes of the Revolutionary struggle is at ready command. And yet the alacrity with which the inhabitants of Ashburnham responded to the alarm of war at the first call of their country was the simple and natural outgrowth of the resolute preparation which had been made during the past two years.

The spring of 1775 was unusually forward; the warm, sunny days of mid April had invited the husbandman to the labors of the field. But in the midst of a peaceful avocation, and attending this external appearance of security and composure, there was a strong undercurrent of suspense and anxiety. Neither the vernal sun nor the balmy air of spring could dissolve the portentous clouds which overhung the



political horizon. And now at a season of the year most suggestive of tranquillity and gladness, all remaining doubt was suddenly removed and all anticipations of an honorable peace were dispelled. The harsh notes of war and carnage resounded over the dying hope of a peaceful settlement of the public grievances. With unfinished furrows and fields half sown, the patriot farmer reversing the prophecy lay down the pruning-hooks for spears and quickly beat the ploughshares into swords. The ominous intelligence that the British were marching from Boston towards Lexington swiftly borne on the wings of alarm was proclaimed in Ashburnham in the afternoon of that historic day. To the signal guns came answering echoes from the surrounding hills, and before the reverberations quivering with alarm had faded in the distance, there came responsive shots from many homes. The town was quickly aroused. The patriots, arms in hand, were hurrying forward from every quarter of the town.

No intelligence of hostilities at this hour had been received. It was only known that the enemy were marching inward. The story of the slaughter of their brethren at Lexington and at Concord was then unknown, nor was it needed to call these men to arms. Under command of Captain Jonathan Gates, a company of thirty-eight men promptly responded to the call and marched that afternoon. Nor was this all. Through the following night the men from the remoter portions of the town responded to the alarm, and busy notes of preparation were constantly renewed. A second company of thirty-three men, under command of Captain Deliverance Davis, was organized. Early in the gray of the following morning they were on the march. The rolls preserve the names of those men, seventy-one in number, who responded thus to the alarm. Leaving homes and family with hasty



farewells, they hastened to the relief of their brethren, and some of them to the familiar scenes of their childhood and to the defence of the homes of their kindred.

The rapidity with which the alarm was spread over the country on the nineteenth of April, has excited surprise. It was not accidental, nor one of those hazard enterprises that sometimes apparently happen in a fortuitous manner. For weeks the committees of safety and correspondence had been preparing for just such an emergency; in many instances it had been arranged who should ride, and to whom deliver the message. At twilight many a vigilant patriot had carefully stabled and fed his fleetest horse, half in expectation that a summons to ride might come before the rising of another sun.

The public records of the town afford no information of the number or the names of these men who promptly responded to the alarm. If tradition was the only remaining source of information, the lists would remain uncertain and incomplete. The traditional statement that this town sent out one company which, on the receipt of intelligence that the affray was ended, returned home the same or the following day, has been quite generally accepted. Ashburnham soldiers in the Revolution did not acquit themselves in that manner. For once tradition shot beneath the mark, but has made ample amends in other fields of information. Fortunately, the muster rolls of these two companies are preserved in the State archives. If additional evidence is required it is not withheld. Among the papers of the late Deacon John C. Davis, a grandson of one of the commanders, is preserved a list of the men under the command of Captain Deliverance Davis. This list and the roll at the State House without exception are the same, and the personal statements of a few of the men will appear in another



connection. Both of the companies marched to Cambridge and there remained with the gathering army several days.

As previously stated, Captain Gates' company left Ashburnham on the afternoon of the alarm. Upon the muster roll, under the head of "Time when marched," there appears opposite every name "April 19." This company continued an organization until May 1, when it was disbanded. A few had previously returned home; a few came home when the company was disbanded and sixteen of them enlisted in Colonel Whitcomb's regiment and remained in the service until the close of the year. Captain Davis' company is credited with marching April 20. It was disbanded at Cambridge, April 30. Three from this company remained in the service. With the exception of three in Captain Davis' company and a few in Captain Gates' company, these men are credited with fifty-five miles' travel.

*Capt Jonathan Gates' Muster Roll in Col John Whitcomb's Regiment of Militia Men who marched from Ashburnham on y<sup>e</sup> Alarm April 19<sup>th</sup> 1775.*

Jonathan Gates, *Captain*  
 Amos Dickerson, *Lieutenant*  
 Ezra Atherton, *Lieutenant*

George Dana, <i>Sergeant</i>	Henry Gates
William Wilder, do	Samuel Joslin
Joseph Metcalf, do	Jonathan Warren Smith
Ebenezer Burgess, do	David Robinson
Daniel Hobart, <i>Corp'l</i>	Jacob Kiblinger
Peter Joslin, do	Henry Hall
Francis Lane, do	Amos Kindall
Joseph Stone, <i>Drummer</i>	Henry Winchester
Amos Lawrence	Samuel Willard
Phinehas Weatherbee	Philip Lock
Moses Russell	Aaron Samson
Nathaniel Parker	Samuel Salter



John Gates	John Whitney
Jonathan Winchester	Joshua Holt
Daniel Edson	Ebenezer Wood
Joseph Wilder	Philip Winter
Nathaniel Harris	David Clark, Jr.

Peter Osgood

*Capt. Deliverance Davis' Muster Roll in Col Asa Whitcomb's Regiment of Militia men who marched from Ashburnham on ye Alarm April 19<sup>th</sup> 1775.*

Deliverance Davis, *Captain*

Ebenezer Conant, Jr., *Lieutenant*

John Conn, *2<sup>d</sup> Lieutenant*

Oliver Stone, <i>Sergeant</i>	Nathan Melvin
John Adams, do	Nathaniel Hastings
Samuel Cutting, do	Samuel Mason
Shubuel Hobart, <i>Corp<sup>t</sup></i>	Ephraim Wetherbee
Timothy Wood, do	David Clark
Oliver Whitecomb, do	Isaac Blodgett
Elijah Edson, <i>Drummer</i>	Joshua Hemenway
Isaac Merriam	John Hall
Oliver Willard	John Kiblinger
Uriah Holt	John Putnam
William Whitecomb	Jacob Willard
William Benjamin	Joshua Holden
Jacob Constantine	Jonathan Taylor
Caleb Ward	Jonathan Taylor, Jr.
Enos Jones	Joseph Perry

Immediately following the affair at Lexington the Massachusetts committee of safety called out the militia. In an address to the several towns dated April 20, the committee urged them "to hasten and encourage by all possible means the enlistment of men for an army." "Our all," says the address, "is at stake. Death and devastation are the certain consequences of delay. Every moment is infinitely precious. An hour lost may deluge your country in



blood and entail perpetual slavery upon the few who may survive the carnage." An answering spirit animated the inhabitants of this town and as will appear a considerable number joined the army gathered around Boston.

In response to this appeal and in full sympathy with the sentiment of the colony the enlistments from this town were neither tardy nor few in number. It is probable that some enlisted at this time of whom no record has been found. The rolls are imperfect and there is no reason to presume that the following lists contain the names of all from this town who were in the service either at this time or at subsequent periods. The muster roll of the company of Captain David Wilder of Leominster in Colonel Whitcomb's regiment bears the names of sixty-eight men including officers. On one of the rolls of this company the residence of each man is stated. The following abstract contains only the Ashburnham men :

	DATE OF ENLISTMENT.
Jonathan Gates, <i>First Lieutenant</i>	April 25 1775
Francis Lane, <i>Sergeant</i>	" 26
Peter Joslin,       "	" 26
Joshua Holt	" 26
Jacob Kiblinger	" 26
Philip Locke	" 26
David Robinson	" 26
Samuel Salter	" 26
Aaron Samson	" 26
Henry Hall	" 26
Henry Winchester	" 26
Samuel Willard	" 26
John Whitney	" 26
Ebenezer Wood	" 26
Philip Winter	" 26



David Clark, Jr.	April 26
Joshua Heimenway	" 26
John Farmer	" 26
Joseph Smith, Jr.	" 27
Jonathan Gates, Jr.	May 29
Isaac Blodget	July 17
John Locke	" 17
Jacob Winter	" 17
Daniel Edson	" 17

The men participating in the siege of Boston remained in the service until the close of the year and some of them remained a few weeks longer or until new recruits came forward to fill their place. In the same service were David Clark, Sen., in the company of Captain Longley in Colonel Whitecomb's regiment, Uriah Holt in Captain Burt's company and Thomas Dutton in Captain Wyman's company of Colonel Prescott's regiment.

Twenty-three men from Ashburnham participated in the battle of Bunker Hill. Several others who subsequently removed to this town shared the danger and glory of that memorable engagement, but at the time were residents of other towns. Of these, twenty were in Captain Wilder's company and the remaining three were Clark, Holt and Dutton who were named in a former paragraph. It is probable that Colonel Whitecomb's regiment, as an organization, was not engaged in the battle of Bunker Hill but it is certain, and the fact is undisputed, that the company of Captain Wilder was warmly engaged on that occasion.

It was this year that the first summer boarders arrived in Ashburnham. We do not know their names nor the families that entertained them. In accordance with stipulations between the committee of safety and General Gage at Boston, many families of that envired town were suffered to



leave unmolested and by the committee were distributed among the several towns of the colony for temporary support. The number of these worthy poor assigned to Ashburnham was twelve.

At the close of the year, 1775, a simple form of State government was in operation, controlled by a house of representatives and an executive council, and judicial courts were duly organized. This form of government was crude and untried. A healthy public sentiment and vigilance, tempered with prudence, were the main protection of the people. The summer of this year had been extremely hot and dry, and the slender harvests occasioned much anxiety and alarm for the future. This condition of affairs, the absence of many of the heads of families in the army, and the extreme solicitude experienced by all concerning the issues of the war, cast a deepening gloom over the trials and anxieties of the closing year.

**1776.** The year 1776 was an eventful one. The fortunes of the army were not decisive in any degree, yet the patriotism and bold faith of the colonists at no time shone forth more conspicuously. The record of the year will afford ample proof that the inhabitants of Ashburnham gave an unqualified adhesion to the more comprehensive plans and the deeper sentiment which animated the colonies. The war commencing on the plea of defence now changed to a war for independence. It was no longer a domestic strife. The patriots ceased to be rebels and a civil war was odious to many. They were now ready for revolution and by the Declaration of Independence, in which they asserted their right and title to all the attributes of a nation, their position among the nations and their attitude to England were suddenly changed. Heretofore, the proceedings of the conventions were recommendations and appeals to



the patriotism of the people; now such enactments assumed the dignity and majesty of law, and, aided by a spirit of obedience which pervaded the colonies, there was no failure of orderly conduct nor any hiatus in the municipal government of the people. Through radical changes and for a season through the failure of any organic law, the town of Ashburnham held meetings, chose officers and levied taxes with no authority except a loyal public sentiment.

In May of this year the General Court passed an order calling upon the people to express an opinion concerning a formal and entire separation from Great Britain. It was not presumed that a reconciliation was either probable or possible, but an explicit expression of opinion was suggested by this action. On the twenty-fourth day of June a warrant for a town meeting was issued and four days later the inhabitants of Ashburnham were assembled to deliberate upon a grave and momentous question. The article and the vote are self-explanatory.

Article 2. To see if the Inhabitants of said Town are willing to stand by the Honourable Congress in declaring the Colonies Independent of the Kingdom of Great Britain with their lives and fortunes to Support them in the measure.

June 28, 1776. Pursuant to the above warrant the town being met made choice of Mr. Elisha Coolidge moderator.

Voted. We the Inhabitants of the Town of Ashburnham, in Town meeting assembled being sensible of the disadvantage of having any further connections with the Kingdom of Great Britain and are willing to brake off all connections with them and it is our Resolution that if the Honorable Congress shall declare the Colonies Independent of the Kingdom of Great Britain that we the said Inhabitants will stand by them with our lives and fortunes to support them in the measure.

The foregoing motion being put was voted unanimously.



Soon after this vote the Declaration of Independence was received in printed form. It was read from the pulpit and transcribed at length upon the records of the town.

At the annual meeting the town chose Jonathan Taylor, John Willard, Jonathan Samson, Abijah Joslin and Ebenezer Conant, Jr., a committee of correspondence. The only remaining action of this meeting relating to the war was a vote "to abate the soldiers highway rates for the last year." The selectmen, upon whom devolved many duties concerning the prosecution of the war, were William Whitcomb, John Kiblinger and Oliver Willard.

In connection with these proceedings the service in the field for the year was the natural sequence of the spirit pervading the town. The company of Captain David Wilder, containing twenty-four men from Ashburnham which participated in the siege of Boston, was discharged on account of expiration of term of service near the close of the year 1775. Without returning home Jonathan Gates, Jr., and possibly others, reënlisted and served an additional term of three months. About this time the army became so depleted by expiration of terms of enlistment that a call was issued for additional troops, and to maintain the army while the new recruits were being enlisted there was also a call for men for a short term of service. For the service last named this town furnished three men who enlisted for six weeks and were assigned to the right wing of the army at Roxbury. They were Jonathan Samson, Jr., Joseph Metcalf and his son, Ezekiel Shattuck Metcalf, in Captain Hill's company of Harvard. In an affidavit of the widow of Ezekiel Shattuck Metcalf, in support of her application for a pension in 1839, she alleges there were four men from this town in that company. Her recollection may be correct but no record of the remaining soldier has been dis-



covered. In the company of Captain Rand of Westminster and in the same service was David Merriam who enlisted for three months in January of this year. When Washington withdrew the army to New York he left at Boston only three regiments of militia. Massachusetts promptly raised three additional regiments for the defence of the harbor. In these regiments, serving under General Ward, Ashburnham was honorably represented.

Jonathan Samson, Jr., after completing the enlistment mentioned in a former paragraph, joined the army again in July and served in the company of Captain Manasseh Sawyer of Sterling in Colonel Dyke's regiment. With his company he was engaged four and one-half months in constructing forts at Dorchester Heights. Again in December he enlisted into the same company and served three months at Dorchester. In the last service he was joined by David Merriam, Ebenezer Bennett Davis and Daniel Putnam. In Captain Warner's company of Colonel Josiah Whitney's regiment are found the familiar names of Uriah Holt and Thomas Ross and in Colonel Dyke's regiment was David Taylor. Jacob Kiblinger and John Hall served two months in the summer of this year in the company of Captain Woods in Colonel Converse's regiment, which for a time was stationed at Dobb's Ferry and at Tarrytown and constituted a part of the main army under Washington. In the same company was Abraham Gibson who then resided in Fitchburg, but subsequently removed to this town where he resided many years.

In the company of Captain Sargent of Princeton in Colonel Josiah Whitney's regiment from May to July were John Kiblinger, William Ward and Jacob Rodiman. They were stationed near Boston and for a short time were with the army in Rhode Island in an unsuccessful attack upon the



British. In the same company was Charles Hastings who enlisted from Princeton but soon after removed to this town.

David Stedman served one enlistment in Captain Fiske's company in Colonel Brooks' regiment, and Nicholas Whitman enlisted December 8 in Captain Alden's company, Colonel Mitchell's regiment.

Three soldiers sealed their devotion to the cause of their country with their lives. These were Peter Joslin, aged about twenty-five years, who died on his homeward journey from the army; Philip Winter, aged twenty-two years, who died in the service, and Daniel Hobart, aged twenty-seven years, who was killed at the battle of White Plains, October 28, 1776. Young Hobart enlisted in June and was assigned to Colonel Coleman's regiment which joined the army under Washington. In this engagement with the enemy he was wounded in the thigh with a musket ball and left upon the field. His retiring comrades beheld the enemy approach and beat him with clubbed muskets.

Dr. Abraham Lowe and David Wallis then of Lunenburg, Isaac Whitmore of Leominster, Cyrus Fairbanks of Harvard, Reuben Townsend of Shrewsbury, Isaac and William Stearns of Billerica, Jonas Rice of Sterling, Reuben Rice of Lancaster, Joshua Fletcher of Westford, Oliver and Jabez Marble of Stow, all of whom subsequently removed to Ashburnham, were in the service some portion of the year.

1777. The spring of this eventful year was a season of deepest gloom and depression. To this time the American army had been engaged in a defensive warfare and very frequently had been found unable to cope with the disciplined and well-equipped forces of the enemy. Very frequently had the American soldier been obliged to retreat from scenes of courage and heroism worthy of victory. The discouragements of the hour were cumulative. To test the endurance



and faith of the colonies came the depressing intelligence of the progress of the haughty army under Burgoyne in its advance from Canada to join the main army at New York. Apparently, a further invasion of the country was inevitable and especially was New England menaced with instant danger. The inhabitants of this town evinced no evidence of terror or dismay but calmly proceeded to adopt defensive measures and to raise their full proportion of men. The activity of the State authorities and the generous response of the Massachusetts and New Hampshire militia at this critical moment are important events in the history of the American Revolution; but it is only the part borne by Ashburnham that appeals for expression in this narrative. The number of enlistments in this town during the year was about one hundred. Some of these men were at Stillwater and Saratoga in the gallant army of General Gates which eventually crushed and annihilated the proud army of Burgoyne, so recently flushed with the hope of spoils and devastation. The latter they realized, but from a standpoint directly opposed to their lofty expectations.

Preliminary to an account of the enlistments for the year some reference should be made to the action of the town and the home trials of the year. Recognizing efficient service, and possibly as an encouragement to their successors in office to pursue a similar policy in the conduct of town affairs, the town in March voted "to allow the selectmen additional compensation for extraordinary services the past year" in a special appropriation of "twenty-four shillings for going to Boston in their country's service." In May, William Whitcomb was chosen "to represent the town in the great and general court to be held in Boston the 28<sup>th</sup> day of May current." This record presents an early employment of the high-sounding and ponderous title that has flattered a legisla-



ture with the weight of its own dignity. It was this session of the General Court which submitted a proposed constitution for the acceptance of the people and which was rejected by a great majority early the following year. The selectmen this year were Samuel Wilder, Deacon John Willard, Jonathan Samson, Jonathan Taylor and Captain Abijah Joslin. The committee of correspondence and inspection were Samuel Foster, William Wilder, Enos Jones, Joseph Metcalf and Francis Lane. Expressive of the sentiment of the town on the subject a committee, consisting of Captain Thomas Adams, George Dana, John Conn, Captain Jonathan Gates and William Wilder, was appointed to remonstrate the Legislature against the proposed measure of calling in the issue of paper money. Captain Adams named in this vote was the father of the centenarian, John Adams. The elder Adams removed to this town, 1775, and very soon after the alarm at Lexington, where he resided, until his death in 1802. If this statement is opposed by other records, it is nevertheless correct. The first reference to a depreciated currency upon the record of this town is found in a vote late in the year "to allow Rev. John Cushing £33½ on account of the fall of money."

It is impossible at this late period to name all the men of Ashburnham who served in the army this year. As is well known, a portion of the muster rolls were never filed among the State papers and others have been destroyed by fire. The roll here given, although imperfect, is highly creditable to the town, while every one will join in a regret that any name has been lost from the record of patriotic service. Among the Massachusetts forces sent to the defence of Rhode Island in 1777, was the regiment commanded by Colonel Josiah Whitney, which included at least five men from this town. They were John Kiblinger, Jacob Rodi-



man, Samuel Metcalf, Jonathan Coolidge and William Ward. The service was rendered in the early part of the year and before this regiment was sent to New York, as the mileage for five of these men due from the State was allowed to the town in June. From other evidence it appears that these men were in service four months. In the summer of this year, intelligence of the fall of Crown Point and Ticonderoga and the steady and triumphant advance of General Burgoyne created a widespread sentiment of the most painful apprehension. Early in July General Schuyler, while retreating before the enemy, issued a proclamation calling to his immediate assistance the militia of New England and New York, and aroused by the danger of the situation, multitudes obeyed the call. While men for this service were being recruited in Ashburnham, there came the startling intelligence that a detachment of the enemy had invaded the soil of Vermont and were pressing on toward the western counties of Massachusetts. The town immediately was in arms, and Captain Jonathan Gates, with twenty or thirty men from this town, immediately marched to the relief of their brethren. So prompt was the action of the authorities, and so responsive was the spirit manifested by the people, that all, or nearly every town in this vicinity, sent an independent company of men who did not delay for regimental organization, but each little company, independent of superior officers, conducted a brief campaign on personal responsibility. These men were not mustered nor organized into regiments and never received pay nor rations for their service. This company, with others from this vicinity, was marched to Charlemont, and was there held to await information of the progress and probable course of the enemy. Learning that the American army under General St. Clair had retreated into New York, and that the probable theatre of war had been removed beyond



their vicinity, they were dismissed and after an absence of three weeks returned to their homes. There were no muster rolls of these men, and, with few exceptions, their names have faded beyond recall. It was an anonymous campaign. In the same expedition were forty-eight men from Westminster, under command of Captain Elisha Jackson; Captain Thurlo led a company of twenty-two men from Fitchburg. Lunenburg was represented by Captain Carlisle and a number of men under his command. In the latter company was Dr. Abraham Lowe, later, the well-known physician of this town.

The few names of the Ashburnham company that can now be ascertained are Jonathan Samson, Jr., William Ward, John Adams, David Merriam and probably Jacob Constantine, John Kiblinger and Nicholas Whiteman. Scarcely had these men returned to their homes and the labor of their fields before they were again called into service. The annihilation of the army under Burgoyne was a preconcerted effort and this call upon the militia was a part of a well-matured plan. Catching the spirit of the undertaking, the men came promptly forward "to drive the Hessians into the woods." Captain Gates was commander also of this expedition and in the rapid organization of the army, his company was assigned to serve in connection with a New Hampshire regiment commanded by Colonel Benjamin Bellows of Walpole. The company, quickly enlisted and hurriedly equipped, was marched through Charlemont, Williamstown and thence to Bennington, Vermont, arriving there two days after the victory of General Stark. Here they were permitted to behold the prisoners there confined and guarded in the meeting-house, and thus stimulated by a view of the fruits of valor, were hurried on to Fort Edward in New York, where a part of them remained until after the surren-



der of Burgoyne, which occurred October 17, and some of them were transferred to other companies and participated in the battles of Stillwater and Saratoga. The number of men from Ashburnham in the second expedition commanded by Captain Jonathan Gates was between twenty and thirty. Only a part of their names has been discovered. They are William Ward, Nicholas Whiteman, Jacob Constantine, John Adams, Jonathan Samson, David Merriam, Jonathan Gates, Jr., John Kiblinger, Ezekiel S. Metcalf, and Mr. Gates, a brother of Captain Jonathan Gates.

To avoid the inconvenience experienced during the preceding two years, on account of the short terms of enlistment, and to create a more stable and a better disciplined army, orders were given early in 1777 to establish the regiments on the continental plan and recruit their decimated ranks with men enlisted for three years, or during the war. For this purpose the quota of Ashburnham was sixteen, and an earnest effort was made to supply the required number. Thirteen men enlisted and were mustered into service May 26, 1777, for three years, and the town or individuals hired the three remaining men, Francis Lee of Pepperell, Andrew Foster of Andover, and Josiah Fessenden of Boston, to complete the quota.

The men from Ashburnham whose names are deeply inscribed in the tablets of the history of the town, were Ebenezer Bennett Davis, David Clark, David Clark, Jr., John Winter, Thomas Pratt, Samuel Mason, John White, Paul Sawyer, Jacob Lock, Thomas Ross, Joshua Holden, Timothy Johnson and Adam Rodiman.

A considerable number of other men from this town was in the service this year. There are many incidental references which establish the fact, but do not reveal the names of the soldiers. In August this year there was a



draft in this town for men to serve three months, but the number of men required has not been ascertained. It appears that David Chaffin was drafted at this time and was assigned to Captain Nathaniel Carter's company in Colonel Cushing's regiment and joined the army under General Gates. On account of sickness he was discharged and arrived home, November 1, 1777.

1778. The new year opened with a town meeting at which the town voted that they "were not willing to send any relief to the Continental soldiers now in the army." The natural construction of this language unfairly represents the prevailing sentiment and the real intent of the town. It was the intention of the town, as appears from other records, that the needs of the soldiers beyond their stipulated pay and bounty should be left with their friends and the generosity of individuals, which had proved adequate in the past and were confidently invoked in this instance. Present in this meeting, perhaps, was Samuel Metcalf, then a youth of sixteen years, who had but recently returned from a long and perilous journey to the army, bearing clothing to his brother Ezekiel to supply a loss caused by the burning of his tent which had left him destitute. With such evidence of the thoughtful care of the soldier in the field, with the hum of the wheel, the click of the loom and the busy needle in every home, there was present in this meeting every assurance that the individual and not the town could best respond to this call upon their charity.

In May of this year, the town approved of the Articles of Confederation proposed by the Continental Congress. The vote was decisive. The records assert "there was but one against it," but the name and motive of this dissenting voice are not revealed. In the midst of the weighty responsibilities resting upon our worthy fathers, perplexed with the demands



of war and the problems of new forms of government, the town eloquently assert their attentive care of the family of the soldier in a vote "to help Timothy Johnson's wife who is in needy circumstances, so that she may be made comfortable."

Timothy Johnson is found in the list of men enlisting the previous year for three years and leaving, doubtless with confidence, his wife and their three babes to the considerate care of his townsmen.

To the husbandman the summer of 1778 was one of great discouragements. The season was extremely dry and the product of the field was small and unremunerative. The partial failure of the crops was keenly felt at a season when the product of the farm was the only means to meet the heavy demands for money and provisions to carry on the war. To give poignancy to their despondency the currency depreciated so rapidly in value that financial ruin seemed instant and inevitable. During the year 1778, the equivalent of a unit of money decreased from one-third to less than one-sixth of its nominal value. One assessment of taxes followed another in rapid succession, until the constable, who was also collector of taxes, only left the door to soon return with renewed demands, and creditors, beholding every dollar of their dues fade in value from month to month, were importunate and peremptory in their demands for immediate payment. In the midst of these depressing surroundings at home came many assurances of amended fortunes.

During the past few months a disheartened and retreating army, receiving timely reënforcement, had fought several successful battles which had completely annihilated a proud and invading army. The patriots had taught the disciplined and well-equipped soldiery of Europe that they were their equals, both in the open field and in the stratagems of war.



They had awakened a renewed confidence in themselves which imparted the strength of cohesion and of discipline to the patriot army. The seat of war was removed to the South, and the calls for troops were less frequent and imperative. The sudden and tantalizing alarms which had characterized the preceding year, giving the minute-men but little freedom from actual service or solitude when at home, for many months were not repeated. In addition to all these flattering omens, which encouraged hope to triumph over despondency, the most enlivening hopes were associated with the alliance with France, and her proffers of assistance in the prosecution of the war. A firmer faith in the success of their cause was everywhere manifested, until many were persuaded to believe that the war was substantially at an end. And yet amid these cheering omens another vial was being opened whose bitterness soon drenched the land; only an oasis had been reached, and not the fruitful soil beyond the desert sands; the clouds were not breaking, but only shifting into new shapes, to again inundate the land with darker days and greater trials.

The record of the preceding year left the continental soldiers from this town with the army under the immediate command of Washington. It will be remembered that these men enlisted for three years. Jacob Lock and Samuel Mason having died the remaining fourteen shared the suffering of a winter of unusual severity at Valley Forge. In the spring of this year with more than two years of rugged service before them they followed the fortunes of Washington in the extreme heat and dangers of Monmouth and in the summer campaign near the city of New York. In the late autumn they were marched to Middlebrook, New Jersey, and there erected huts for the winter. The new recruits this year are found in several regiments and in as many branches of the



service, and there is ample evidence that several were drafted or enlisted in the spring and summer whose names and service cannot now be stated.

The men that were being enlisted to recruit the decimated ranks of the continental regiments were so few in number that the General Court called for two thousand men to serve in these regiments for the term of nine months. For this service three men from this town volunteered or were drafted. William Ward enlisted in the month of June and was assigned to Colonel Marshall's regiment, from which he was discharged March 7, 1778, and about the same time and under the same requisition, Jonathan Benjamin and Benjamin Clark entered the service and were mustered at Fishkill, New York. The muster rolls describe Benjamin as seventeen years of age, five feet and six inches in stature and of light complexion. Clark, the roll alleges, was at this time sixteen years of age, only five feet and two inches in height and light complexion. Young Clark was not a tall soldier, and as he lived to enlist again, there is license for the presumption that his head was carried below the line of greatest danger. Having filled this quota, the selectmen express their relief in a letter to the General Court.

TO THE HON<sup>BLE</sup> COUNCIL & HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
STATE MASSACHUSETTS BAY.

These may certify that the Town of Ashburnham have complied with the resolve of the Court of the 20<sup>th</sup> of April 1778 last in raising Continental men and the men marched when called for.

ASHBURNHAM Aug 24<sup>th</sup> 1778.

OLIVER WILLARD }  
JOHN CONN } Selectmen.

· WORCESTER SS Aug 20<sup>th</sup> 1778.

personally appeared Capt Jonathan Gates of Ashburnham and made oath to the above certificate before me.

SAMUEL WILDER  
Town Clerk.



Reference is made in the following letter to a subject of which the result cannot be stated. The fact that Benjamin Clark was eventually mustered into service at Fishkill for nine months, and at that time the father, David Clark, had two full years to serve, would indicate that he was not accepted as a substitute for his father.

ASHBURNHAM June 01 y<sup>e</sup> 1778.

this is to sortify that Jonathan Benjeman has ingaged in the continental sarvis nine moute and Likewise Benjeman Clark in the Rom of his father David Clark, he being a man in years and I should be glad if you would except him in his romm.

JONATHAN GATES, Captain.

To Mr Worshbon the superentendent for the County of Worcester.

In the summer of this year, a combined attack, by land and water, upon the British army at Newport, in Rhode Island, was projected. An army raised from the militia of New England was sent to reënforce General Sullivan, and to coöperate with the French fleet. Calls were also made this year for men to serve in defence of Boston and the military stores deposited there. In the former service there were at least four men from this town. They were enlisted or drafted in June to serve the remainder of the year. They were assigned to the company of Captain Benjamin Edgell in Colonel John Jacob's regiment, which was a part of the army under General Sullivan. They arrived home the first week in January, 1779. The descriptive list of the men from Ashburnham is of interest.

NAME.	TIME OF ENLISTMENT.	TRAVEL.	TIME OF SERVICE.	WAGES.
Ezekiel Metcalf,	June 25th,	100 miles,	6 mos 12 days,	£29-15-3
John Chamberlain,	June 24th,	100 "	6 " 13 "	29-18-4
David Chaffin,	June 25th,	100 "	6 " 12 "	29-15-3
Simon Rodiman,	June 26th,	80 "	6 " 11 "	29- 5-8



To meet the requirements for service at Boston, a number of men was drafted or recruited to serve three months. Among them were Jonathan Samson, Jr., Nicholas White-man and John Hall, who were assigned to the company of Captain John White of Lancaster, and stationed at Castle island. In service at this time and near Boston, were David Steadman and William Ward. The latter served only one month and was employed at Prospect Hill in guarding prisoners, the remains of Burgoyne's army. From this service he returned in season to enlist in Colonel Marshall's regiment, as stated in a former paragraph.

Ashburnham was now required to furnish its proportion of clothing for the army. A resolve was adopted by the General Court, March 13, 1778, requiring each town in the State to furnish as many shirts, pairs of shoes and stockings, as would be equal to one-seventh part of all its male inhabitants. These articles were ordered to be collected in each county and forwarded to the army by the county agent, whereupon each soldier was to receive one shirt, one pair of shoes and one pair of stockings "as a present from the people of the State." Under this resolve, the quota of Ashburnham was immediately filled. If the quota of this town was seventeen, more shirts were forwarded than was required, but it is probable that the excess of shirts was intended as an equivalent for a deficiency of shoes and stockings. If this supposition is correct, the quota of Ashburnham was twenty, which represents that at this time there were one hundred and forty male inhabitants in this town. The following letter of the selectmen is a part of this proceeding :

TO MR. JOHN WAIT Agent and Receiver of Clothing for the  
County of Worcester

*Sir* these are to inform you that we have complied with the



resolve of Cort last sent in providing clothing for the solgers.  
we have provided

Seventeen pr of Shoes cost £3 pr <sup>pr</sup>	£51
and seventeen pr Stockings £1:16-0 pr <sup>pair</sup>	£20=12=0
and twenty-seven Shirts at £1:16 apiece	£48=12=0

and as we have received no funder orders Since the Resolve of the  
general Cort concerning the Clothing we do send them by Dea<sup>n</sup>  
Samuel Wilder to you to be Rec<sup>d</sup> as our part of the clothing for  
this time

Sum total  
for Clothing

Ashburnham Sept 16-1778 £130-4-0

So we remain your friends & Humble Serv.

OLIVER WILLARD	} Selectmen.
JOHN CONN	
WILL <sup>m</sup> BENJAMIN	

To the Hons<sup>ble</sup> Corts Committee we leave the Troble of Collect-  
ing and Cost of Transporting 37 miles to the agent to your Honors  
Judgment.

This account was audited June 5, 1779. The price of the  
shoes was reduced to forty-eight shillings a pair and £5-11-0  
was allowed for transportation thirty-seven miles.

Concerning the record of one of the continental soldiers of  
the town, an important fact remains as yet untold. Adam  
Rodiman deserted. If he had been a man of diminutive  
stature, like Benjamin Clark, it might reasonably be pre-  
sumed that he was temporarily overlooked and the record  
made before the oversight was noted, but he is described as  
twenty-three years of age, six feet high, dark eyes and hair  
and by occupation a blacksmith. Whether he repented and  
returned, whether he was returned by force without repent-  
ance, or whether he neither returned nor repented, does not  
appear in the records. It is known, however, that after the  
war he resided several years in this town. Ah! Adam,



hadst thou known that one hundred and more years after thy desertion of the post of duty, this act of thine would be recalled, that the faithful historian who records with impartial pen the deeds of the just and the unjust, giving at once to the principal inhabitant and most lowly citizen his fair measure of censure or praise as his life and service are revealed in the records and traditions of the town; hadst thou known and realized all this, thou wouldst have remained to share the trial and dangers bravely endured by thy heroic comrades, and wouldst have conquered a cowardice that gives an only stain to the ensign armorial of the good old town of Ashburnham. But, alas! like thy progenitor, whose name thou bore, thou too didst fall.

1779. The theatre of the war having been transferred to the Southern States, the call for men was less imperative than in the years preceding. At the same time the military spirit of the people waned with the removal of danger from the borders of New England. If the number of men was comparatively small, the labor in procuring them was no less onerous than in former years. In accordance with a resolve of the General Court, passed June 9, eight men were raised in July to recruit the continental army. Three of these men to serve nine months were mustered with the following description:

	ft.
Ebenezer Conant, age 36, height	5—9
Jacob Constantine, “ 27, “	5—9
John Kiblinger, “ 24, “	6—0

The roll also announced that all of them were of dark complexion. Many of the continental men who entered in 1777 were in Colonel Greaton's regiment at this time. Succeeding the repeated failures in the past, a successful attempt to dislodge the enemy from Rhode Island was made



this year. In this service Ashburnham was represented by at least five men who were drafted in July and served six months. They were marched under command of Sergeant Stone to Providence, and at the close of the campaign were discharged at Newport. A part or all of them were assigned to Captain Thomas Fiske's company in Colonel Tyler's or Colonel Jackson's regiment. The names which have been found from nearly as many sources are as follows: Sergeant Joseph Stone, Jonathan Gates, Isaac Merriam, William Winchester and Jonathan Winchester. In the autumn David Merriam took the place of his brother Isaac Merriam. In the early autumn, Ashburnham was required to send four men, styled fatigue-men, to serve three months under Captains Henry and Wilson at Castle William and Governor's island. The men engaged in this service were David Chaffin, Edward Whitmore, Nathaniel Kendall and David Samson. Daniel Bond of this town was in the service as fatigue-man at this time, but probably did not enlist at the time the others were recruited, and William Ward served three months this year at West Point in a company commanded by Captain Burt of Harvard. At the close of the season the Northern army, which included the continental soldiers from this town, retired into winter quarters, — one division at West Point, New York, and the other at Morristown, New Jersey.

At the annual meeting, Isaac Merriam, Nathaniel Harris and Daniel Putnam were chosen a committee of correspondence. The selectmen were John Conn, Oliver Willard and Amos Dickerson. William Whitcomb was again selected to represent the town in the General Court at this session, which did not adjourn until October. He was permitted to join with his associates in a fruitless attempt to regulate by law the price of articles of merchandise. If such legislation



at all times and under all circumstances has proved futile, in this instance the legislators recognized the exigencies of the hour and manifested more courage than wisdom in the advancement of remedial measures. The ineffectual measures of the Legislature were supplemented by the recommendations of county conventions. The convention which assembled in Worcester August 11, proposed a schedule of prices for many articles of merchandise, and with great earnestness and solicitude, recommended the people to adopt them in the conduct of their business.

In this proceeding the convention essayed to effect by appeal that which the Legislature failed to accomplish by the force of law. The town of Ashburnham promptly adopted the recommendations of the convention and chose Samuel Wilder, Captain Jonathan Gates, Jacob Harris, Moses Tottingham and Francis Lane a committee to encourage the people, and through the force of a firm, public sentiment compel them to adhere for a time to the stated prices. In these proceedings the necessities of the people were demanding relief. But the love of gain, the insatiable greed of speculation and the personal interest of the few who had the ability to profit by the necessities of the many rendered all these measures ineffectual. In February the General Court submitted to the people the proposition of calling a convention for the purpose of forming a State Constitution. The town of Ashburnham voted May 21, "That this State have a new form of Government as soon as may be, and also that our representative vote to have a State Convention called for that purpose."

On an article in the warrant for the May meeting, "To see if the Town will allow Mr. Jonathan Samson and Mrs. Hemmenway for two small Deer sent in to the service," the decision was in the negative. The same fate attended a



proposition to pay Deliverance Davis "for going to Albany for to carry cloathing to the soldiers." If these decisions of the town fail to satisfy the sensitive nature of loyal descendants, they can be consoled with the fact that there could not have been a great sum of money in the treasury, and any action on these points was quite immaterial so long as the soldiers had and enjoyed both the deer and the clothing. Having previously chosen a committee, consisting of Jacob Harris, Captain Jonathan Gates, Lieutenant Amos Dickerson, John Adams and Francis Lane, to estimate and equalize the service in the army of each man in Ashburnham, the town adopted the report of this committee August 30. That report if it had been preserved would have afforded the outline of a more accurate history of Ashburnham during the Revolution than can now be written.

Thursday, December 9, 1779, was a day of thanksgiving in all the States. The observance of this day is seldom noticed in history, but there are many evidences at hand to establish the fact that in many places there were religious exercises, and that our fathers, burdened with the weighty problems of the hour, and oppressed with the existing state of public affairs, did make a solemn effort to find occasion for thankfulness on this memorable day. The journal of Isaac Stearns informs us that the day was observed in Ashburnham, and that Mr. Cushing preached from the text: "The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein."

**1780.** The record of death continues. Again the open ranks of the continental regiments are the silent oracles of their valor. In prompt response to renewed acquisition for men, seven recruits from Ashburnham were mustered into the service for six months at Leicester. With other recruits they were marched from Springfield July 2, under command



of Captain Phineas Parker. These men were styled new levies, and were assigned to the Massachusetts regiments already in the field and stationed at West Point. The names of these recruits are found upon the descriptive lists on file in the State archives.

NAME.	AGE.	STATURE.	COMPLEXION.
Samuel Metcalf	19	6—2	light
David Chaffin	18	5—9	light
Edward Whitmore	16	5—6	light
Elijah Mason	19	5—5	light
Simeon Rodiman	18	5—4	dark
Isaac Merriam	18	5—2	light
Jacob Rodiman	20	—	—

On another roll crediting this service to Ashburnham, is the name of Nathaniel Breed, but there is no other evidence that he was from this town. The service of these men and others in the continental army at this time covers an important chapter of Revolutionary history. They were with the Northern army at the time of the treason of Arnold and the execution of André. In an application for a pension, David Chaffin alleges he was one of the guards and was within ten feet of André when he was executed. Isaac Merriam says he was in New Jersey when André was hanged and when Arnold attempted to deliver up West Point, and afterwards marched back to West Point and was there discharged at the expiration of six months. Edward Whitmore was in a detached service for a time but joined his regiment a short time before he was discharged. He says he recollects Arnold's treason and saw Major André executed. In July there was another requisition for men to serve three months. Jonathan Samson, Jr., Andrew Winter, Jr., and Reuben Rice, who removed to Ashburnham this year, entered the service and also served at West Point.



In the summer of this year, the men who enlisted for three years came home at different times in the order of their discharge from the companies in which they had served. On the arrival of each little band, the pastor read their names the following Sabbath and offered the prayer of grateful thanks to Almighty God for their preservation from the dangers of war and their safe return to the avocations of peace. John White was probably discharged on account of disability the previous year. He continued his residence here and became an inhabitant of Gardner when that town was incorporated.

The selectmen for 1780 were Samuel Wilder, Isaac Merriam and Francis Lane. For a committee of correspondence, Captain Deliverance Davis, Stephen Randall and Jonathan Samson were selected and the town also made choice of Captain Deliverance Davis, Levi Whitney and Amos Lawrence to hire the soldiers for the ensuing year. The vote of this town upon the adoption of a State Constitution was an emphatic expression of approval and is mentioned in another chapter. In September, the civilian and the soldier, reaping the early fruits of the war, cast the first vote of Ashburnham for State officers chosen by the people, and at the same time Samuel Wilder was chosen as the last representative under the temporary form of government.

The winter of 1779-80 was one of unusual severity. The men in Ashburnham brought wood for their daily fire upon their backs, and the brooks and springs being congealed by frost, a scarcity of water aggravated the discomforts of an inclement winter. The extreme cold and deep snow of that season were the theme of frequent remark as long as that generation endured.



1781. The selectmen for this year were Jacob Harris, Hezekiah Corey and Enos Jones. For a committee of correspondence, the town selected Samuel Cutting, Timothy Fisher and Henry Winchester. At the same meeting in which these officers were selected, while struggling with the burdens of the Revolution and at an hour when their burdens were most onerous, the inhabitants of the town were prepared to direct their attention to other questions and to give a serious thought to a proper observance of the Sabbath. There was an article in the warrant for this meeting, "to see if the town will pass any vote to prevent travelling on the Sabbath." The succeeding article was the one of set form which appeared in the annual warrant for many years: "to see if the town will let swine run at large the ensuing year." As would rationally be expected of our devoted worthies, they voted to put every legal restraint upon men and proffered the freedom of the town to the swine.

If a smaller number of men was required for the army this year, they were procured with increased effort and under great financial embarrassment. While the three years' men were being raised, there was an intermediate call for men to recruit the army while the enlistments for a longer time were slowly progressing. These men were more easily procured. In June Corporal Phinchas Hemenway, Jonathan Merriam and William Ward enlisted. They were assigned to Captain Sibley's company in Colonel Drury's regiment and were discharged the last of November. This was the seventh enlistment of William Ward. With the close of the preceding year came a call for more men to serve three years in the continental army. The town, embarrassed by the depreciated currency which had nearly become worthless, and by their inability to offer anything more substantial than a promise, passed the following vote



as an encouragement to any who might be prevailed upon to enlist: "Voted that each man that will engage to serve in the army for three years shall have eighteen head of three years old cattle given him when his time is out, and if he be discharged in two years then said cattle are to be but two years old or if he serve but one year they are to be but one year old, all to be of middling size." In other words, the soldier was to receive a bounty of eighteen calves and the town was to keep them of middling size as long as the soldier remained in the service. The vote is an apt illustration of the straits to which our worthy fathers were driven in the solution of the financial problems which attended their daily lives and official labors. The cattle bounty was not favorably received. The proposition savored of veal. The town could not retract its step and again offer a bounty in currency, for that in the mean time had utterly failed. There could be no failure in the end. The originators of the calf project are again found equal to the emergency. They called to their aid in alluring their fellow-townsmen to enlist, the click and gleam of silver and gold. They offered each man who would enlist for three years, ninety pounds lawful money as it was rated in 1774. There was substance in this proposal. True, the tender was not necessarily in specie, but it was of a known and absolute value and equivalent to three hundred dollars. This vote was adopted in February and two months later five men were mustered into the service for the term of three years. All of them were described as of light complexion.

David Clark	24 yrs of age	5 feet 9 inches in stature
Jonas Benjamin	19 " " "	5 " 10 "
John Coolidge	17 " " "	5 " 3 "
James Ledge	27 " " "	5 " 5 "
John Mar—(blurred)	29 " " "	5 " 7 "



In August following the committee was instructed "to hire the two three years men that were still wanted on the best terms they can." Near the close of the year the men were procured.

Peter Rodiman, age 16, height 4 feet 11 inches, enlisted December 9. A boy of that age and stature enlisting for three years might be expected to look pale, but the muster rolls assert that at the time of engagement, he was of dark complexion. The other man was our old acquaintance, Benjamin Clark, who has added two inches to his stature since his former entrance into the service. One week after the enlistment of Rodiman, the other name was added to the muster rolls. Benjamin Clark, age 20 years, height 5 feet 6 inches, complexion light, and occupation, farmer. This was the last enlistment from Ashburnham. At the close of the war, young Clark returned to this town and in 1787 removed to Reading, Vermont. The three years' men were called for in resolve of the General Court adopted December 2, 1780. The call was for four thousand two hundred and forty men and the quota of this town was seven. It has appeared that more than a year elapsed before the town was able to secure all the men. Eventually the General Court took note of the delinquency and imposed a fine amounting to four hundred and twenty-eight pounds and five shillings. In the mean time the town had fulfilled the demand and petitioned the Legislature to remit the fine, which request was granted:

TO THE HONOURABLE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
IN GENERAL COURT ASSEMBLED :

The Petition of William Whitecomb in behalf of The Town of Ashburnham Humbly sheweth that the said Town of Ashburnham is Fined in the Last State tax for a Deficiency of two three years



men which were absolutely Raised & marched agreeable to the Resolve of the 2<sup>nd</sup> of Dec<sup>r</sup> A. D. 1780 & subsequent resolves as will appear by the Receipt of the Superintendent; your Petitioner therefore Prays That your Honours would take the matter into your wise Consideration & Grant an abatement of the fines. As in Duty bound shall ever Pray

WILLIAM WHITCOMB.

In support of their petition the town produced the receipts for the required number of men, signed by Colonel Seth Washburn of Leicester, superintendent of enlistments.

LEICESTER June y<sup>e</sup> 26 1781.

Received of the town of Ashburnham five men who have enlisted and past muster &c., &c.

SETH WASHBURN

Superintendent.

These were David Clark and the four others named in a former paragraph.

LEICESTER March y<sup>e</sup> 27 1782.

This day received from Ashburnham Benjamin Clark a soldier for the term of three years.

S. WASHBURN Supt.

LEICESTER June 11 1782.

This day received from the town of Ashburnham one man to serve three years.

S. WASHBURN Supt.

The last receipt probably refers to Peter Rodiman and it will be observed that all the receipts are dated some time subsequent to the entry of enlistment on the military rolls. It is possible that these receipts were of set form and were issued by Colonel Washburn, whenever the town had need of them, as vouchers in answer to the demands of the General Court.



The five soldiers who were recruited in the summer for three years according to tradition were hurried on to New York and from thence immediately proceeded with the army under Washington to Virginia, and there is ample evidence to sustain the assertion that some of the men enlisting this year remained in the service until near the close of the year 1783. The discharge of David Clark signed by General Knox is dated December 24, 1783.

The name of Jacob Winter appears in Captain Wilder's company in 1775. His subsequent service is not known, but he died a prisoner at Halifax in the autumn of 1777. The death of Samuel Mason, mentioned in the annals of 1778, is recorded by Mr. Cushing in September, 1777, and Jacob Lock who was in the same service died a few weeks later. He was a son of John Oberlock whose children assumed the name of Lock. The same year Francis Kendall died, as stated by Mr. Cushing, "on his way from the army."

And now after these years of carnage in the field and of denials and endurance at home, the curtain falls at Yorktown. The campaign of 1781 is ended. The nation's hope gleams in the bayonet and flashes in the sword of the returning soldier, while the hardships of the campaign are witnessed in his weary progress and the results of an exhaustive war are felt on every hand.

In the pursuit of the narrative through the foregoing pages, the burdens of taxation and other incidents of the home life of our fathers during the Revolution have been suffered to remain for mention in separate paragraphs. At the beginning of the war the colonists were not without resources but were unskilled in the art of finance. The colonial wars in which the people had been engaged had been maintained by a paper currency which though depreciated in



some measure was eventually redeemed by allowances from the treasury of England in the payments for service rendered by the colonies. The paper money of the Revolution had no such foundation. After a brief season of apparent solidity it gradually depreciated in value until in 1781 it utterly failed and suddenly went out of circulation by general consent. The experience of the people of Ashburnham from this source was probably no greater and certainly no less than that of other towns. Sums of money voted by the town for specific purposes so rapidly depreciated in value before the tax could be assessed and collected that the appropriation became inadequate for the purposes proposed and frequent disputes concerning balances arose between the debtor and the creditor. Explanatory of the intrinsic value of sums of money mentioned in the preceding and subsequent pages, the following table commencing with the year 1777 when the depreciation in earnest began will represent for each succeeding month the number of pounds that were equivalent to one hundred pounds of standard value :

	1777	1778	1779	1780	1781
January . . . .	100	325	742	2934	7500
February . . . .	104	350	868	3322	7500
March . . . . .	106	375	1000	3736	7500
April . . . . .	110	400	1104	4000	7500
May . . . . .	114	400	1215	4800	7500
June . . . . .	120	400	1342	5700	12000
July . . . . .	125	425	1477	6000	
August . . . . .	150	450	1630	6300	
September . . . .	175	475	1800	6500	
October . . . . .	275	500	2030	6700	
November . . . .	300	545	2308	7000	
December . . . .	310	634	2393	7300	

The burden of taxation is seen in the following excerpts from the town records. Other sums were assessed for war purposes under command of the General Court, of which no entry was made in the current volume of records.



- 1778 December 16. We have assessed the inhabitants and estates in said town in the sum of £401-19-6 and have committed the lists to the constables for collection.
- 1779 February 18. Town and county rate committed for collection £357-9-11.
- 1779 August 30. Voted and granted £6150 to defray the charges of the war.
- 1779 September 13. We have assessed the inhabitants and estates in Ashburnham in the sum of £26364-7-0 and have committed the same to the constables for collection.
- 1780 January 27. Committed for collection state and county rate amounting to the sum of £4328-9-0.
- 1780 June 14. Voted and granted £2500 to defray town charges.
- 1780 June 27. Committed State tax for collection amounting to £6966.
- 1780 July 3. Voted and granted £7000 to defray the charges of the war and that the committee give security for any money that may be hired.
- 1781 March 5. Voted that each man be allowed fifteen pounds per day for labor on the highway.
- 1781 August 20. Voted and granted £300 silver money for town charges.  
Voted that the constables take four shillings in lieu of one hundred dollars old emission from those persons who are behind in rates.

By a resolve of the General Court adopted in September, 1780, Ashburnham was required to supply the army with three thousand one hundred and twenty pounds of beef. The new obligation was promptly met by the town.



1780      October 5.   Voted that Amos Lawrence buy 3120 lbs.  
                                 of beef for the army.

In December following the General Court made a second requisition for beef and again the inhabitants of Ashburnham are assembled in town meeting prepared to second the provisions of the Legislature for the support of the army.

1780      December 27.   Voted and granted £7200 for buying beef  
                                 for the army.

Probably on account of the depreciation of the currency, this sum proved inadequate for the purpose. The proportion of Ashburnham was five thousand nine hundred and ninety-two pounds.

1781      January 15.   Voted and granted £1800 to be added to  
                                 £7200 granted at the last meeting and voted  
                                 that Capt. Francis Lane purchase the beef.

In June following came another demand from the Legislature and another town meeting was the natural sequence. This meeting was convened July 11, and after listening to the requisition, the town chose Captain Lane "to buy the beef wanted," and at the same meeting instructed their agent to procure the beef for which the town was in arrears on the former requisitions. Either reminded of their delinquency, or prompted by a sense of duty, the town are assembled again in August and pass the final vote on the subject in choosing Benjamin Lane to buy all the beef that is wanted for the army. The last requisition was for twelve thousand four hundred and seventy-three pounds.

Among the cumulative burdens of the Revolution, and another item in the extended list of the demands upon the resources of a patriotic and uncomplaining people, was a second requisition for clothing which came simultaneously



with the third and last requisition for beef. It was a renewed appeal to the patriotism of the times. Our worthies neither faltered nor complained but promptly paid every demand upon their slender means and every tithe upon their daily toil. In addition to the meeting for the choice of State officers, there were seven town meetings in the year 1781, and the burden of them all was to raise money and consequently to increase the lien upon their future crops and the future labor of themselves and their families. During the closing years of the war the experience of the patriot at home, oppressed by poverty and met by the vigilant demands of increasing taxation, is a sublime exhibition of patience and courage. Frequently compelled to surrender to the oft-returning tax-gatherer the choicest of his herds and the ripening product of his fields, making contributions of beef from the needs of his family and dividing his garments with the soldier in the field, he teaches posterity the sacrifices made and the price paid for national existence. Ever prominent in the annals of Ashburnham and seen in the light of the lustre of the achievements in the field will be the home trials and the sacrifices which attended the daily life of the patriot citizen.



## CHAPTER VI.

### REVOLUTIONARY HISTORY. — CONTINUED.

PERSONAL NOTICES. — EBENEZER MUNROE. — ABRAHAM LOWE. — JOSEPH JEWETT. — SAMUEL KELTON. — REUBEN TOWNSEND. — ISAAC STEARNS. — WILLIAM STEARNS. — ISAAC WHITMORE. — CHARLES HASTINGS. — DAVID WALLIS. — CYRUS FAIRBANKS. — EBENEZER WALLIS. — THOMAS GIBSON. — JONAS RICE. — REUBEN RICE. — ELIAKIM RICE. — JABEZ MARBLE. — LEMUEL STIMSON. — ABRAHAM TOWNSEND. — JOHN BOWMAN. — JOSHUA FLETCHER. — JOSEPH MERRIAM. — ASA BROCKLEBANK. — JONATHAN GATES. — JONATHAN SAMSON. — EZEKIEL S. METCALF. — DAVID CLARK. — DAVID CHAFFIN. — EBENEZER B. DAVIS. — ISAAC MERRIAM. — DAVID MERRIAM. — JOHN WINTER. — WILLIAM WARD. — EDWARD WHITMORE. — REUBEN RICE. — ABRAHAM LOWE. — JOSEPH JEWETT. — REUBEN TOWNSEND. — LEMUEL STIMSON. — JONAS RICE. — JABEZ AND OLIVER MARBLE. — THOMAS GIBSON. — CHARLES HASTINGS. — JOSEPH GIBBS. — DAVID WALLIS. — CYRUS FAIRBANKS. — JOSHUA FLETCHER. — JOSEPH MERRIAM. — NAMES OF PENSIONERS RESIDING IN ASHBURNHAM 1840.

A CONSIDERABLE number of the citizens of this town who removed hither during the last years, or soon after the close of the Revolution, had previously served in the army. While their service constitutes no part of the history of Ashburnham in the Revolution, these men subsequently became so intimately connected with the affairs of this town that the events of their lives are a part of its general history and their service in the war, even if performed while they were residing elsewhere, claims admission in this record of the lives and services of the citizens of Ashburnham.

EBENEZER MUNROE, who removed to this town about 1782, where he lived highly respected until his death May



25, 1825, was a prominent actor in the engagement at Lexington, which is clearly established by the depositions of those who were engaged on that occasion. Replying to a remark made by a comrade as the British began firing that they only fired powder, Ebenezer Munroe exclaimed, "They have fired something besides powder now for I am wounded in the arm." He then discharged his gun receiving two balls from them in return, but neither did serious harm. His deposition was taken April 2, 1825, only a short time before his death in which he says, "After the first fire (of the regulars), I received a wound in my arm; as I turned to run I discharged my gun into the main body of the enemy. Another ball passed between my arm and my body and just marked my clothes, one ball cut off a part of my ear-locks which were pinned up. The balls flew so thick I thought there was no chance of escape and that I might as well fire my gun as stand still and do nothing." He claimed that he fired the first gun on the American side. Being wounded he mounted a horse and rode from town to town alarming the people and carrying with him the convincing proof that the war in earnest had begun.

ABRAHAM LOWE, while a resident of Lunenburg, was in the service two months at the siege of Boston, two months commencing December 1, 1775, and five months in New York in 1776. He was also a volunteer at the Bennington alarm in 1777.

JOSEPH JEWETT, then residing in Bolton, enlisted for eight months in the spring of 1778, and served in New York. Enlisted again in 1779 in Colonel Denney's regiment; also served at West Point three months in 1780 in Colonel Rand's regiment.

SAMUEL KELTON, then of Needham, was a sergeant in Captain Aaron Smith's company, at Lexington alarm, and a



captain in Colonel Patterson's regiment in the siege of Boston. He was known in Ashburnham as Captain Kelton from the date of his removal hither.

REUBEN TOWNSEND, then a citizen of Shrewsbury in 1776, served in New York five months and nine months in 1777. His first enlistment was in Colonel Smith's regiment and the second in Colonel Bigelow's regiment.

ISAAC STEARNS, previous to his removal from Billerica, was a soldier in the siege of Boston eight months and participated in the battle of Bunker Hill.

WILLIAM STEARNS, a brother of Isaac, was in the same company and for the same length of time. He removed to this town soon after this service.

ISAAC WHITMORE, while a resident of Leominster, was in Captain Maxwell's company in Colonel William Prescott's regiment for one year commencing January 1, 1776, and was discharged at Peekskill, New York. No record of service after his removal to this town has been found. The war record of Edward Whitmore, being performed after his removal to this town, is found in the preceding chapter.

CHARLES HASTINGS, then living in Princeton, served two months in 1776 in Rhode Island, also six months in 1777 in Colonel Keyes' regiment, and this service was also in Rhode Island. Enlisted again in 1778, and was a guard over prisoners from Burgoyne's army at Watertown and later at Rutland. This service was three or four months. Immediately after he enlisted in Colonel Wade's regiment and served six months again in Rhode Island and was in the engagement at Newport; also was in the continental army six months commencing July, 1780, and serving a part of the enlistment in Colonel Groaton's regiment he was transferred to Captain Haskell's company of Light Infantry under General Lafayette. This service was at West Point.



DAVID WALLIS, then a resident of Lunenburg and a youth of seventeen years, was in the service one month in Captain Bellows' company and was at Fort Edward. In 1778 he was three months at Castle William, again in 1779 he served three months in Captain Martin's company stationed at Governor's island and Castle William.

CYRUS FAIRBANKS, then residing in Harvard, was a volunteer at the Lexington alarm and subsequently a drummer eight months in Captain Jonathan Davis' company; was stationed at Cambridge and at Prospect Hill. In 1776 was a drum-major in the army near the Hudson, was also at Fort Edward one month in 1777.

EBENEZER WALLIS, at the age of fourteen years, was in the service three months at West Point in 1780. The following year he enlisted again for three months and was at or near West Point. The first service was in Colonel Rand's regiment and the last service was in Colonel Webb's regiment. After the war he resided in Lunenburg and in Vermont, removing to Ashburnham about 1830. In 1835 he started for New York and died on the way.

THOMAS GIBSON, then of Fitchburg, served five months in the siege of Boston and two months in 1776 in New York. In 1777 he served in Captain Thurlo's company and in 1780 he again enlisted for three months and joined the Northern army at and near West Point. He also served a few months at Boston harbor. Removed to Ashburnham very soon after his last term of service.

JONAS RICE, then residing at Salem, was a volunteer at the alarm at Lexington and served eight months in the siege of Boston. He then removed to Sterling and from there enlisted in 1776 for five months and was assigned to the army in New York. In 1777 he served two months in Rhode Island. Removed to Ashburnham in 1779.



REUBEN RICE was drafted at Lancaster December, 1776, for a term of three months and served the time in New Jersey. While temporarily residing in Winchendon in 1777 he served in Captain Boynton's company in New York. In the spring of 1780 he removed to this town and was subsequently in the army at West Point.

ELIAKIM RICE removed to this town in 1779 or 1780. He resided here several years and removed to Hartland, Vermont. While a resident of Salem he served two or more enlistments. He was at the siege of Boston in Colonel Bridge's regiment. His company, in which was his brother Jonas Rice, was engaged at the battle of Bunker Hill.

JABEZ MARBLE, then of Stow, served from October, 1775, to March, 1776, at the siege of Boston in Captain Brooks' company, Colonel Dyke's regiment. This service was performed for his twin brother Oliver, who had previously served three months of an enlistment for eight months. Only the name of Oliver Marble is found, as Jabez Marble answered to that name while completing the term of his brother. He served terms of two months each in 1777 and 1779, both in Rhode Island, and in a later campaign in the same locality he served three months in 1780. The two brothers removed to Ashburnham from Stow, 1780.

LEMUEL STIMSON, who removed to this town near the close of the war, had previously served two or more enlistments. He was in the siege of Boston and was engaged in the battle of Bunker Hill. His second service was at Ticonderoga in 1776. He was a native of Weston and resided in that town until he removed to Ashburnham.

ABRAHAM TOWNSEND removed to this town about 1778, where he resided many years. Later he removed to Berlin, Vermont. He was in the service eight months at Fishkill in 1778. No further record has been found and there is no



reason to presume that he was not in the service at other times during the war.

JOHN BOWMAN, who resided in Lexington until after the Revolution, removed from Andover to this town about 1810, served four enlistments and is found on the rolls of service in New York and Rhode Island.

JOSHUA FLETCHER, then of Westford, served an enlistment of seven months in Boston harbor and again three months at Boston. He then in February, 1777, entered the continental army for three years and was in Captain Thomas' company, Colonel Marshall's regiment. He was at the battle of Stillwater, the surrender of Burgoyne, and passed the winter at Valley Forge. Following the army in 1778 to New York on account of disability he was granted a leave of absence August 29, 1778, but was unable to rejoin the army. He removed to Ashburnham about 1810.

JOSEPH MERRIAM, then of Lexington, served two months in Rhode Island in 1779. In the following year he was one of the six months' recruits in the continental army, being assigned to Colonel Marshall's regiment. This service was in New York. In 1781, he again enlisted by agreement with the town of Bedford, and counted on the quota of that town and was again assigned to the Northern army on the Hudson. He removed to Ashburnham at the close of the war and subsequently to Templeton.

ASA BROCKLEBANK, while residing in Rindge, served two enlistments. He removed to this town in 1777 and returned to Rindge after a residence here of several years.

It is possible, and the conjecture is reasonable, that the names of some revolutionary soldiers, who resided in this town during the war or soon after removed hither, are not included in these pages. Indeed, it has been shown that there were demands for men and quotas were filled in



several instances where only a part of the names could be ascertained.

The fact that there were more enlistments than are here recorded is additional credit to the town and augments its patriotic record. In the preceding chapter and in the foregoing record of service, nothing has been assumed. If service in the army was not sustained by the record it has been neither disputed nor asserted. It has now become a fact that the men of the Revolution who did not win the laurels of war by personal service have had them thrust upon them by the generous and applauding lips of tradition. The missing rolls of many Massachusetts regiments give unusual license to conjectural statements, but affirmative testimony is the prime requisite of historical statement. In every instance an honest effort has been made to obtain all the available record on any subject, and while employing every established fact, the more fanciful narrative of tradition has always been heard with many grains of allowance; and if for these substantial reasons the history of Ashburnham is not as extended as might be desired, it is mainly correct.

The following statements made by the actors in the great drama of the Revolution were secured through the generous favors of Hon. Henry W. Blair, United States Senator from New Hampshire. These papers were received after the material for the preceding chapter collected from many sources had been arranged in the order of events. Of great interest in themselves they also sustain the outlines of the narrative to which they are subjoined. These papers, being the sworn statements of the revolutionary soldiers in support of their several applications for pension, are authentic accounts of their service. It is a matter of regret that the personal statement of all who bore arms in the war for



independence are not preserved. It is suggested at once that only the younger soldiers were living at the time these applications for pension were made. It also appears that some of the applicants gave only a partial account of the service performed. In such cases, doubtless, it was not deemed necessary to assert and prove more than one or two enlistments, and, seizing upon those terms of service which could be most easily proved, no mention was made of additional service. Others, it will be observed, present a full account of each enlistment.

JONATHAN GATES, whose affidavit introduces these interesting accounts of personal service, was a son of Captain Jonathan Gates. When an infant, and previous to the date of incorporation, the family removed to this town. September 11, 1832, at the age of seventy years, he says :

I. He enlisted at Cambridge in April, 1775, in Captain David Wilder's company, of which Jonathan Gates, Sen., was lieutenant, in Colonel Asa Whitcomb's regiment, and marched from Cambridge to Prospect Hill where he remained during the eight months of his enlistment, and after the expiration of his time he volunteered to stay until new recruits came, and stayed there three months longer, making eleven months in all.

II. In September, 1777, a short time before the taking of Burgoyne, enlisted at Ashburnham under Captain Jonathan Gates, Sen., for one month. Colonel Bellows commanded the regiment and we marched for the place when Burgoyne was taken near Beaman's Heights.

III. Enlisted at Ashburnham soon after the taking of Burgoyne, thinks it was in 1777, under Captain Whitney; marched to Castle William and was there three months on guard over prisoners from Burgoyne's army.

IV. Enlisted at Ashburnham in 1778 or 1779 [it was in December, 1777] for three months under Captain Jonathan Gates, Sen., marched to Bound Brook, New Jersey, and remained there for the full term of his service.



V. In 1780, or 1781 [it was in 1779], enlisted for six months at Ashburnham in Captain Fiske's company, in Colonel Jackson's regiment and remained there for his term of service.

In 1833 Mr. Gates gives additional particulars of his last service and says, "That orders were received for a certain number of men to go to Rhode Island; thought the number required of Ashburnham was seven, and he turned out as one of the seven. No officer but a sergeant went out with them. The sergeant was Joseph Stone. When they reached Providence, he was requested to go into Captain Fiske's company. He thinks that Captain Fiske's first name was Jared. He was not sure he had given the year correctly but it was when the British lay on Rhode Island. After about two months' service he was detailed with seventeen others, a lieutenant, one corporal and sixteen privates, to go on board a prison ship in which were thirty-two British prisoners; the ship lay at Fox Point, below Providence. He was on this ship about six weeks and received a wound on his head by the breech of a musket. The prisoners rose upon them one night and got possession of some of the guns. He was struck on the head in coming up the hatchway and bore the marks then (1833) of the blow. They succeeded in getting the mastery over the prisoners without the loss of any lives on the part of the guard, but two of the prisoners were missing. Soon after this he was detailed with twenty others to go to Bristol after hay for the continental horses. The hay was brought upon three boats, seven men to a boat, the whole under command of Lieutenant Nestle."

He further alleges, "that he was born at Harvard September 27, 1762, and lived at Ashburnham during the war." He moved to Salisbury, New York, 1798, to Antwerp, New York, 1815, and to Champion, New York, 1818.



JONATHAN SAMSON, eldest son of Jonathan Samson, was born at Harvard, May 7, 1759. The family settled in this town previous to date of incorporation. His statement was made in this town September 6, 1832, in which he says :

I. He enlisted in December, 1775, for six months and went to Roxbury, Massachusetts, and was put into the militia company of Captain Hill of Harvard. Thomas McBride of Boston was lieutenant and Samuel Sawin of Westminster was ensign.

II. Again enlisted in early part of summer of 1776 for four and a half months and went to Dorchester, Massachusetts, and was put into militia company of Captain Manasseh Sawyer of Sterling. Samuel Sawin of Westminster was lieutenant and the ensign was Carter. He was employed the whole time in building forts at Dorchester Heights.

III. Again enlisted in December, 1776, for three months in the last named company, and was stationed during this service at Dorchester Point near Boston.

IV. He also entered the service in July or August, 1777, was called out. A detachment of Burgoyne's army had made an incursion into Vermont and a call was made on Ashburnham for volunteers to go to oppose this force. Says he marched with about twenty others. They went as far as Charlemont, Massachusetts, where they were ordered to wait further orders and while there the company was dismissed. They volunteered for one month but were out only about three weeks.

V. Again enlisted in April, 1778, for three months in a militia company commanded by Captain White of Lancaster, Massachusetts, and was stationed on Castle island in Boston harbor.

VI. Again enlisted in July, 1780, for three months, and marched to West Point, New York, and on his arrival there was put in a company commanded by Captain Reed. The lieutenant was Brigham of Northborough, Massachusetts. Arnold had command there during this time and his plot to surrender to the enemy was discovered during this time.



William Ward, of Ashburnham, says "that he served with the claimant during the last enlistment."

John Hall, of Ashburnham, says that "he served with the claimant during the fifth service."

EZEKIEL SHATTUCK METCALF, a son of Joseph Metcalf, was born in Groton October 13, 1759. The family removed to Ashburnham, 1770. He died May 31, 1831. In support of the widow's application for a pension, the following statements were made at Ashburnham, August 26, 1839 :

Eunice (Brooks) Metcalf, widow of Ezekiel Shattuck Metcalf, alleged that her husband served as an orderly sergeant and private in the war of the Revolution. She thinks that he served thirteen or fourteen months in all; and that one term was in Rhode Island and one at Roxbury, and that one of said services was rendered under Captain Gates and the other under Captain Jackson of Gardner. That later he rendered a service at Bennington at the time of the battle there in Captain Edgell's company, and says she was in the field with her father and while there Metcalf came to the field, being on the way to the north part of Ashburnham, to warn some of the soldiers to go to Bennington. Says she was an inhabitant of Groton at the time when Metcalf rendered his first services, but that he resided at Ashburnham from early childhood to his death.

Margaret (Metcalf) Townsend, widow of the elder Reuben Townsend, September 10, 1839, says she was a sister of Ezekiel Shattuck Metcalf, and that he being only sixteen years old served six weeks at Roxbury. Only four went from Ashburnham and her brother and her father were two of them. She remembers of preparing clothing for her brother and that he again entered the army for six months and served in Rhode Island. He left home then in the spring and while gone his tent was burned and he lost a part of his clothing and sent home for a new supply which we prepared and sent by my brother Samuel. He was an orderly sergeant in this service. She says her father and brother left for



Roxbury on the six weeks' tour in the month of November or December, and that her father was a sergeant in the company at home, but not at Roxbury.

Charles Hastings, of Ashburnham, March 10, 1840, alleges that he enlisted from Princeton, that he served six weeks in Rhode Island with Metcalf and was in another company of the same regiment, and that after the war he purchased a farm near Metcalf and they often talked over their service. He had heard Metcalf say he was an orderly sergeant in that service.

On file with these affidavits, there is an original order which was put in as evidence in the case.

ASHBURNHAM Jan'y 15 1782.

TO MR. CAPT. BENJAMIN EDGEAL,

*Sir* please to pay to the Barer the State pay for the sarvis I did in your company in the year 1778 and this Resept shall be your distorg for the same.

EZEKIEL METCALF.

SAMUEL METCALF, a brother of Ezekiel, was born March 15, 1761, and died December 25, 1822. The widow alleges "that he served in Captain Gates' company of Asa Whitcomb's regiment at the alarm April 19, 1775." If so, he was only fourteen years of age and his name does not appear on the rolls of the company. She was his second wife and was born in 1776, and possibly could be in error in regard to the events of the war. In the case are filed minutes from muster rolls which prove service of Samuel Metcalf in Captain Joseph Sargeant's company in Rhode Island, 1777; in Captain Cowdin's company to reënforce the continental army in 1779; and his name appears on list of six months' recruits in 1780. In this case there was also filed an original order, as follows:

ASHBURNHAM July 3 1784.

*Sir*: Please to pay to Sewill Moore the whole of my continental wages that is due me for three months service done in the



year 1779 and this shall be your sufficient discharge for the same as will appear by the Captain's books.

SAMUEL METCALF.

Attest: REBECCA METCALF

SARAH WINCHESTER.

It was represented in the preceding chapter that David Clark and his sons, David and Benjamin, were in the service much of the time during the war. The family removed from Concord to Ashburnham previous to 1765.

DAVID CLARK, JR., under date of April 14, 1818, testifies to one term of service. It is known that he was in the army at other times. He alleges that he served in the continental establishment from March, 1781, to December 24, 1783; first, in the company of Captain Kilby Smith in the Sixth Massachusetts Regiment, and then in the same company in the Second Massachusetts Regiment after the reduction of the Sixth, under Major Burnham, commandant. Clark's original discharge, signed by General Henry Knox, is on file, with his application for pension. In July, 1820, Clark made an additional statement in which he asserts, "he is a farmer in Ashburnham, has a wife Sarah, aged fifty-three years, whose health is good; a daughter Grata, aged seventeen years, who is feeble; a daughter Sally, sixteen years, who is in good health, and a son George Washington, aged eight years. These," he says, "are all the children who reside with me."

DAVID CHAFFIN, a son of Timothy Chaffin, was fourteen years of age in 1775 when the family removed from Harvard. Increasing in years and probably in stature, he became a soldier in 1777. He says:

I. He was drafted in August, 1777, at Ashburnham for three months [his father was drafted and he went as a substitute], and marched to Bennington, thence to Stillwater and there joined the



main army and remained there until Burgoyne surrendered; then went to Half Moon, thence to Albany, and was there taken sick and was discharged by Major Rand and arrived home at Ashburnham, November 1.

II. In June, 1778, was drafted at Ashburnham for six months; marched to Providence, and from there into the Island, thence to Tiverton where he was discharged by Captain Edgell and arrived home January 4 or 5, 1779.

III. In September, 1779, at Ashburnham, enlisted for three months, as a fatigue-man, under Captain Henry, marched to Boston, thence to Castle island and Governor's island, where he served out the time.

IV. In 1780, enlisted at Ashburnham for six months; marched under Captain King to Springfield and there joined the regiment commanded by Colonel Bradford and went to West Point and was one of the guard and within ten feet of Major André when he was executed. Remained there until discharged and reached home the last of December, 1780.

Daniel Bond, then of Claremont, New Hampshire, in July, 1833, testifies that "he served with Chaffin at Boston in 1779 and also says that at one time Chaffin went for his father who had been drafted."

Chaffin removed to Claremont, New Hampshire, soon after the Revolution and was residing there when his application for pension was made.

ELENEZER BENNETT DAVIS, son of Captain Deliverance Davis, was born in Littleton February 4, 1761. In his infancy the family removed to this town. His statement is brief but it includes three years of time and the service modestly stated was severe in the extreme. April 14, 1818, he alleges that "he enlisted in the continental establishment May 26, 1777, and served until May 26, 1780, in the company of Captain Hafield White in the Fifth Massachu-



setts Regiment, commanded by Colonel Rufus Putnam in General Nixon's brigade."

His original discharge is on file with his application.

This certifies that Bennett Davis has served three years in the fifth Massachusetts Regiment Being the full term of his Inlistment. Has conducted Himself as a good and faithful soldier and is hereby Discharged the Service.

Given under My hand at Quarters Soldiers fortune this 26 day of May 1780.

HAFFIELD WHITE

Capt. Com<sup>dt</sup>

He states in explanation that he was discharged in the Highlands in the State of New York and that he enlisted under the name of Bennett Davis, but that his full name is Ebenezer Bennett Davis.

ISAAC MERRIAM came to Ashburnham previous to 1774 and remained a resident of this town until after the Revolution. In 1833, then a resident of Northumberland, New Hampshire, alleges that he enlisted at Ashburnham and served three months at Boston harbor, does not remember the date.

II. Again in 1779 enlisted at Ashburnham for six months in Captain Fiske's company in Rhode Island, and thinks the service commenced in the spring. When he had served three months, his brother David came and took his place as his substitute.

III. Again enlisted at Ashburnham, he thinks in 1780, for six months; did not remember whether he was then in the Continental or State Service. He marched to Springfield and then to West Point where he remained about a month and then marched into the Jerseys and was there when Arnold attempted to deliver up West Point and when Major André was hanged; was there about a month or more and while there marched through a place called Topon or Tampacin and a place called English Neighborhood, also



a place called Haverstraw. Afterwards he marched back to West Point and was there discharged. In this service he belonged to General Patterson's brigade and Colonel Bradford's regiment. While he was at West Point two men were sentenced to be and were shot, he does not recollect for what, and two were condemned to run the gauntlet for forging discharges from General Poor and deserting. He saw the sentence executed.

DAVID MERRIAM, a brother of Isaac Merriam, presents in 1832 the evidence of several enlistments. He was then living in Brandon, Vermont.

I. He alleges that in 1776, then living at Ashburnham, he enlisted January 27, and marched to Dorchester and labored on the forts. The enemy killed four men while he was at Dorchester. The next day they picked up one thousand four hundred balls. It was in March, a few days before they evacuated the place. Was discharged at Dorchester.

II. In 1777, when they heard of Burgoyne's approach, he enlisted for two [one] months in Captain Gates' company of Colonel Bellows' regiment. We marched to Bennington but did not arrive until a day or two after the battle, then marched to Fort Edward where he joined the Rangers and joined the main army at Stillwater. He was again at Fort Edward, where he was discharged, at the time Burgoyne surrendered.

III. In 1779, he again enlisted for three months in Captain Fiske's company and marched to Providence, thence to Bristol, and when the enemy left Newport they marched in. Was sick part of the time and was discharged after three months' service. [The name of Isaac Merriam is borne on the rolls from July, 1779, to January, 1780, which includes the service of the two brothers in this campaign.]

It also appears that the attention of the claimant was called to the fact that in the first service at Dorchester his name was not borne on the roll of Captain Manasseh Sawyer's



company after the last day of February, and that he made a subsequent statement in which he alleges :

That he must have been in service at Dorchester in 1776, later than the last day of February and that he was there in service when the British left Boston ; he saw them when they sailed out of the harbor and saw our officers enter the other side of the town ; this was the seventeenth of March. He might have been assigned to some other company but recollected that he was certainly there then. He says that one week before the British left he was a party of three hundred to go at night and build a fort on Dorchester Point, next to Boston, and that the British discovered their object and kept up a constant cannonade all night and four men were shot dead by his side.

“ His attorney,” he says, “ put two services in 1777, for one month each together and called it one service of two months. That at the time of the battle of Bennington he was out one month and immediately after he was out one month and joined the army under General Gates, and that his captain in this service was Jonathan Gates.”

In support of the statement of the claimant in regard to his first enlistment, Jonathan Samson and Ebenezer Bennett Davis, “ both of Ashburnham, alleged that they served with and were messmates of David Merriam at Dorchester in 1776 in the company of Captain Manasseh Sawyer of Colonel Dyke’s regiment.”

JOHN WINTER, a son of Andrew Winter, a name written Windrow in the early records of the town, was born March 1, 1756, about two years before the family with other Germans settled in Ashburnham. He died in this town June 19, 1811. The widow made application for pension, producing copies from muster rolls to prove that he was in the continental army three years, having served in Captain Halford White’s company of Colonel Putnam’s regiment from



May 26, 1777, to December 31, 1779, and continuously in the Light Infantry until May 26, 1780. The principal witness Margaret (Metcalf) Townsend alleges in 1846, "that she well recollects when John Winter went into the army as he was a near neighbor of her father and says that he with others who were going into the service attended service the Sabbath before they left for the army and asked prayers in their behalf as was the custom of the time, and that when the said John Winter with Timothy Johnson, Ebenezer Bennett Davis and Thomas Ross returned from their three years' service, they again attended church and their names were read and thanks returned for their safe return which was customary at that time."

WILLIAM WARD was born in Waltham June 5, 1757, and came to this town when fifteen years of age with his older brother Caleb Ward. A few years later he purchased land in the northeast part of the town where he resided until his death. In the preceding chapter it appears that he completed seven terms of service during the war. In his applications for pension made in 1818, 1830 and 1833, he does not refer to his last enlistment and service under Captain Sibley in 1781, but his name appears on the muster roll. Mr. Ward and other soldiers in the company of Captain Gates in 1777 affirm that they were in the regiment of Colonel Benjamin Bellows, a New Hampshire regiment. It appears that this statement of Mr. Ward was questioned and he explains, at length, the circumstances of the case. This company from Ashburnham is not found in the rolls of Colonel Bellows' regiment. It is probable that Captain Gates' company, being suddenly called into the field, was not included in any regimental organization but was more closely allied to Colonel Bellows' regiment than to any other.



I. Mr. Ward alleges that he enlisted May, 1776, for two months and served in a militia company commanded by Captain Sergeant of Princeton; marched to Providence, thence to Boston Neck, thence back to Providence where he was discharged; that while at Providence he labored on a fort at Beacon Hill.

II. That in July, he thinks, 1777, he volunteered to oppose a detachment of the British army that was defeated at Bennington and at this time marched from Ashburnham to Charlemont, Massachusetts, where he remained about one month. He cannot recollect his officers for this tour of duty. [This service was under Captain Jonathan Gates.]

III. That in September, he thinks, 1777, he again enlisted at Ashburnham for one month and served in a company of militia commanded by Captain Gates of Ashburnham in the regiment of Colonel Bellows of Walpole, New Hampshire; marched through Charlemont, Williamstown, Massachusetts, and Bennington, Vermont, to Fort Edward, New York, where he remained until his discharge, and where he was at the time of Burgoyne's surrender.

IV. That in the spring of 1778, April, he thinks, he enlisted for one month and served at Prospect Hill, near Boston, that he was engaged during this term in guarding prisoners, a part of Burgoyne's army, who were kept in the barracks at Prospect Hill. He did not remember his officers at this time.

V. That he enlisted about the first of June, 1778, for a service of nine months in Captain William Warner's company of Colonel Marshall's regiment of General Patterson's brigade of Massachusetts line and was discharged March 7, 1779.

VI. That in the month of September, 1779, he thinks, he again entered the service for three months under the following circumstances: Francis Lane and Oliver Willard, two of the principal inhabitants of Ashburnham, requested him to enlist and as an inducement engaged to clear four acres of new land for him. He thinks that they were authorized by the town to offer such inducements. He served the three months at West Point in a company commanded by Captain Burt of Harvard and Lieutenant



Annanias Rand. Lieutenant Rand was cashiered, he thinks, for larceny. They marched from Ashburnham through Springfield and Hartford to West Point, New York.

In the last statement explaining how he remembers about his service of thirty days at the time of the capture of Burgoyne in 1777 and how he remembers the name of Colonel Bellows of Walpole, New Hampshire, "I have good reason for remembering the name" which is as follows :

"On the night previous to the surrender of Burgoyne, I was on guard with a young man, about my own age, in the woods nearly half a mile from Fort Edward, at a quarter where it was feared the Indians might make an attack. In the course of the night I swapt guns with said young man. The next morning he came to see me wishing to 'swap back,' which I declined and he left me ; but fearing I might lose a good bargain I immediately exchanged the gun with one Gates, a brother of my captain. It was not long before this young man came with an officer who desired me to return the gun, and not being pleased with the replies I made, he left, and in a few minutes returned with a file of men and ordered me to the guard-house. This I remember was early in the afternoon and the news of Burgoyne's surrender was received while I was thus confined. Our company was immediately dismissed and I was relieved from confinement by order of Major Bridge. The officer who came with the young man aforesaid, was Colonel Bellows, and he it was who ordered me to the guard-house. When we arrived at Fort Edward, Captain Gates told us we were to serve under New Hampshire officers and that the Colonel's name was Bellows. We were quartered in brush huts a short distance from Fort Edward, and were allowed to follow our inclinations with a few salutary restraints. I cannot remember that we were ever paraded or exercised with Colonel Bellows' regiment."

Charles Hastings of Ashburnham, 1832, corroborates the statement of Ward in regard to the service in Captain Sar-



gent's company in 1776 and says that he (Hastings) served in the same company.

Jonathan Samson of Ashburnham, 1832, corroborates as to the last service of William Ward and says that he served at the same time and adds that about twenty men then volunteered from Ashburnham and served without pay or rations, volunteered for one month but served only about three weeks.

Nicholas Whiteman of Ashburnham, 1832, corroborates the statement as to service at Fort Edward in 1777 under Captain Jonathan Gates, and says he (Whiteman) was in the same service, and also corroborates Ward's last statement and adds that he thinks about thirty volunteered from Ashburnham; also says that they were paraded before Colonel Bellows and Major Bridge who furnished them with refreshments, said to have been taken from Burgoyne's boats as they were attempting to pass down the river.

EDWARD WHITMORE, youngest son of Joseph Whitmore, was born in Leonminster, August 12, 1763.

Soon after the removal of the family to this town he entered the army at the age of sixteen years. In the following statement he has given an intelligent account of his service.

He says that in September or October, 1779, he enlisted at Ashburnham for three months with William Kendall, David Chaffin and Abraham Samson [it was probably Nathaniel Kendall and David Samson], being the number called for from Ashburnham. He marched directly to Boston with written instructions from his captain or from the selectmen (he could not say which), to go to the State House in Boston; when they arrived there they were ordered to Castle island; there remained a short time, then went to Governor's island in the harbor of Boston, there employed in repairing the fort on Castle William and clearing the trenches



at Governor's island under the command of Captain Wilson. The engineer's name who had charge of the works was Burbanks. He next enlisted for six months with six others, David Chaffin, Samuel Metcalf, Isaac Merriam, Jacob Rodiman, Simon Rodiman and Elijah Mason, in the month of June, 1780, marched from Ashburnham to Leicester; there mustered, from thence to Springfield; again mustered and put under command of one Captain Parker; from thence to West Point; there stationed a few days and then divided and sent to the several companies in which they were to serve. He was put into Captain King's company, Colonel Bradford and Lieutenant-Colonel Bassett, Fourteenth Massachusetts Regiment, Major Smith, General Patterson's brigade. Soon after he was placed under Captain King, the troops were called for to march to White Plains, cross from White Plains to Robinson's Farm; there received counter-orders, and from thence to Verplank's Point, there one or two days, and from there across King's Ferry to Orangetown, he thinks; from there to Totoway, Tunic Plains, Paramus and other places, and in the month of October or November marched to a place called New Windsor, above West Point; there employed in taking care of what was called the Park, military stores and arms; there about one month and then joined his regiment at the Highlands; remained there about one week and then received his discharge. He well recollects Arnold's leaving West Point. Saw Major André executed, which he thinks took place at Paramus.

Isaac Whitmore of Ashburnham, a brother of Edward Whitmore, says that Edward left their father's family in June, 1780, to join the continental army, and that about the first of January, 1781, "I went from home for the purpose of assisting my brother on his return to my father's and met him at Simsbury, Connecticut, as near as I can recollect."

REUBEN RICE was born in Lancaster, now Boylston, August 10, 1757. He served one term in the army after his removal to this town in 1780.



I. He alleges he was drafted at Lancaster in November or December, 1776, for three months and served in the company of Captain Eager of Sterling. They proceeded to Bound Brook, New Jersey, by way of Worcester, Danbury and Morristown, crossing the river at King's Ferry. That their duty was to protect the person and property of the inhabitants from plunder and insult by detachments from the British army which lay near by. They also had about a dozen prisoners of war under guard.

II. In September, 1777, again enlisted in the militia company of Captain Boynton of Winchendon, where he then resided, for the term of one month. They marched to Saratoga by way of Northfield and Bennington, then went up the river to Fort Edward, then down the river a few miles. This last move was near the time of Burgoyne's surrender. He saw the arms of the enemy stacked on the field after they had marched off and saw a party of Canadians start for Canada after the surrender.

III. In July, 1780, again enlisted in a militia company of Captain Boutelle of Leominster, of Colonel Rand's regiment. Marched to West Point where he remained during this term of three months' service. During this service, Arnold attempted to betray the American army.

Eliakim Rice of Hartland, Vermont, a brother of Reuben Rice, testifies that "both were in the service at about the same time but not in the same company."

Thomas Gibson of Ashburnham testifies to service with Reuben Rice at West Point in Captain Boutelle's company.

DR. ABRAHAM LOWE gives an intelligent outline of his service under date of October 16, 1832.

I. He alleges that about December 1, 1775, he entered service as a volunteer in the militia company of Captain William Pope, the lieutehant being Thomas Hartwell, he thinks. He enlisted from Lunenburg and marched to Dorchester and remained in that service for two months, although the enlistment was for six weeks only.



II. He enlisted about July 1, 1776, for five months, from Lunenburg in militia company of Captain Jabez Keep of Harvard. He marched to New Haven, went thence by water to New York city; was there when the city was taken by the British under command of General Fellows. He was on guard near the Bowery on the morning when the British landed above there and took possession of the city. General Putnam came to their assistance and took them away. He was discharged about December 1, 1776.

III. In summer of 1777, it being reported that the Hessian troops were marching on Bennington, he volunteered under Daniel or David Carlisle of Lunenburg. They marched to Charlemont, where they heard of the battle of Bennington and went no farther. After a service of about a month, he returned home.

JOSEPH JEWETT in his application for pension only asserts one enlistment and that in concise terms. He says that while residing in Bolton he enlisted in the month of May or June, 1778, in Captain John Drury's company of Colonel Woods' regiment. He proceeded to White Plains with a small party and there joined his company; was on duty at Fishkill and White Plains and employed during the winter in building barracks and drawing timber. He was dismissed at Peekskill after he had completed his tour of eight months.

After his death the widow made a renewed application for pension and said her husband did not state all of his service when he applied for pension. At that time she presented proof of other service which is stated in a former paragraph.

REUBEN TOWNSEND was born in Shrewsbury August 23, 1758, where he continued to reside until he removed to this town about 1780.

I. He alleges that in June or July, 1776, he enlisted in Captain Newton's company of Colonel Smith's regiment, for five months, and was discharged at Philips Manor, New York, in December, 1776, or January, 1777.



II. In 1777, he enlisted in Captain William Gates' company of Colonel Bigelow's regiment — the Fifteenth Massachusetts — for eight months, and was discharged at Valley Forge with an allowance for pay for nine months.

Lieutenant Joseph Pierce certifies that he enlisted Reuben Townsend about the first of May, 1777, in the continental service for the term of eight months and that he was allowed one month's extra pay for helping build the barracks at Valley Forge and that after discharge the said Townsend had to march nearly four hundred miles before he reached his home.

LEMUEL STIMSON was born in Weston, July 11, 1758, and removed to this town in 1780. In his application for pension dated October 16, 1832,—

He alleges that he enlisted while residing in Weston, in May, 1775, for eight months, in the company of Nathan Fuller of Newton, in Colonel Gardner's regiment; that he was stationed at Cambridge during the entire service, and was engaged in the battle of Bunker Hill, and that Colonel Gardner was wounded in said battle and died the third day after, and Colonel Bond of Watertown succeeded Colonel Gardner.

II. He enlisted again in June or July, 1776, for five months, in the company of Captain Charles Miles of Concord, in Colonel Reed's regiment, and marched to Ticonderoga, by way of Fitchburg, Winchendon, Keene, Charlestown (No. 4) and Rutland; was stationed at Ticonderoga nearly all of the service, often employed in transporting wood across the lake for the use of the army, and was discharged at Albany in November, was also residing at Weston at time of last service.

JONAS RICE, a son of Zebulon Rice and a brother of Reuben and Eliakim Rice, was born in Lancaster, now Boylston, February 16, 1754. At the time of his first service he was residing in Salem and the subsequent service



was performed while he was a resident of Sterling. He removed to this town, 1779.

I. He alleges that he enlisted April 19, 1775, in a company of volunteers, at Salem, commanded by Captain Derby and marched to Cambridge. After a week of service he enlisted at Cambridge for eight months in the company of Captain John Bachelor of Colonel Bridge's regiment. [This company was engaged in the battle of Bunker Hill.] He was stationed during all of this service on Cambridge common at the house of one Hastings; that he was employed under General Putnam in an attempt to construct a fort on Lechmere Point, from which they were driven by British ships.

II. He again enlisted in the summer of 1776, for five months in militia company of Captain Samuel Sawyer. Marched from Sterling through Worcester, Hartford and New Haven to New York city; remained a few days in New York and then moved up the Hudson about two miles; was on duty at Fort Prescott when the city of New York was given up to the British. He then moved up to Harlem Heights where he remained through the rest of this service.

III. He again enlisted about July 1, 1777, for six months in militia company of Captain Francis Willson of Holden, Colonel Keyes' regiment. He marched to Leicester, thence to Providence, thence to a place about two miles south of Greenwich, thence through Warren to Tiverton and thence back to Providence. During this term of service he went to Point Judith to assist in collecting boats to be used in an attack on Newport. In sailing around the point many of the boats were destroyed, eight men drowned and the contemplated attack was abandoned.

Eliakim Rice, brother of Jonas, of Hartland, Vermont, but formerly of Salem, testifies that he served with his brother in the first service named commencing April 19, 1775.



JABEZ AND OLIVER MARBLE were twins and their service in the army partook of the close alliance of their lives. They were born in Stow September 15, 1755, and removed to Ashburnham 1789.

I. Jabez Marble alleges that in the fall after the British left Boston he went to Roxbury and took the place of his brother as a private soldier in Captain Caleb Brooks' company of Colonel Benjamin Dyke's regiment, and served a tour of three months at Boston and was verbally discharged on the seventh of March, 1777.

II. In May, 1777, he enlisted for two months in Captain John Gleason's company. Marched from Stow to Providence where he was stationed until about seventeen days before his time was out, when his company and Captain Hodgman's marched to Greenwich for the defence of the coast; remained there about two weeks and then returned to Providence where he was discharged.

III. He again enlisted at Stow in August, 1780, in company of Captain Moses Brintnall of Sudbury, Colonel Howe's regiment. He went to Rhode Island and was stationed the entire three months at Butt's Hill and was employed on fatigue duty building a fort.

In a subsequent statement explaining his service as substitute for his brother he says that his brother's name was Oliver Marble; they were twins and that about two months prior to the end of Oliver's term of service his brother became sick and he took his place for the balance of the term and always answered to his brother Oliver's name when it was called.

THOMAS GIBSON was born in Lunenburg, now Fitchburg, 1753, and resided there until the close of the war. After a temporary residence in Ashby he removed to this town, previous to 1787.

I. He alleges that he enlisted in the spring of 1775, for five months in Captain Stearns' militia company in Colonel Doolittle's



regiment. He lived at Fitchburg and marched thence to Winter Hill near Charlestown where he remained during the term of service. There were also continental troops at Winter Hill.

II. He again enlisted in September, 1776, at Fitchburg for two months in Captain Jonathan Woods' militia company of Colonel Converse's regiment. He marched to Dobb's Ferry, near West Point, passing through New Haven. Made several marches from Dobb's Ferry, one to Fairfield, Connecticut, towards New York city, etc. There were continental troops at Dobb's Ferry a part of the time while he was there. He remembers that on one occasion they brought a field-piece to bear upon a vessel at anchor off Dobb's Ferry and drove her down the river.

III. Again in July, 1780, he enlisted at Fitchburg for three months in the militia company of Captain Boutelle of Leonminster of Colonel Rand's regiment. Marched through Worcester, Hartford and Fairfield to West Point. Arnold's treachery was discovered during this term of service, which enables him to fix the year as 1780. He saw Washington at West Point shortly after Arnold's treason was made known, that he was on guard when Washington rode up.

IV. In September, 1777, he thinks, he enlisted and served thirty days at the taking of Burgoyne in the militia company of Captain Thurlow of Fitchburg; was posted first at Batterskill and after at Fort Edward to prevent the British crossing the Hudson.

V. In April or May, the year he does not recollect, but thinks it was towards the close of the war, he enlisted for three months in the militia company of Captain Joshua Martin of Lunenburg and served at Castle William in Boston harbor, in the regiment of Colonel Jones. There were continental troops on the island who were quartered in the fort and militia were outside in barracks.

Reuben Rice of Ashburnham testifies that he served with Thomas Gibson from July, 1780, in Captain Boutelle's company.

Ebenezer Wallis of Ashburnham testifies that he served with Thomas Gibson in the tour from September, 1780, at West Point.



CHARLES HASTINGS was born in Princeton, November 26, 1760, and removed to this town, 1783. While a resident of Princeton, he entered the army five times. September 6, 1832, he gave the following intelligent account of his service :

I. He alleges that he enlisted in May, 1776, for two months in a militia company commanded by Captain Sargeant of Princeton in the regiment of Colonel Josiah Whitney. He marched to Leicester, thence to Providence, thence to Greenwich, Rhode Island, thence to Boston Neck, and thence back to Providence.

II. He again enlisted at Leicester in June, 1777, for six months in Captain Willson's company of Colonel Keyes' regiment. He marched to Providence, thence to Greenwich, he thinks, thence to Bissell's mill, about two miles from Providence, and thence back to Providence. That during these two terms, there were only a few troops in Rhode Island and they were employed in guarding the coast.

III. He again enlisted about April 1, 1778, in militia company of Captain Nathan Harrington. Marched to Roxbury and thence to Watertown where they were employed in guarding a part of the prisoners from Burgoyne's army. Marched from Watertown with prisoners to Rutland, where they remained guarding said prisoners to July, 1778, when he was discharged. The guard was commanded by Major Reuben Reed.

IV. He again immediately enlisted July, 1778, for six months, in the militia company of Captain Belknap of Colonel Wade's regiment. Marched to Providence, thence to Obdike Newtown, or a place of some similar name; thence to Newport where they joined a continental brigade. Engaged in the battle of Newport in October, 1778, and retired from there to Tiverton, thence to Obdike Newtown and thence to Providence.

V. He again enlisted about July 1, 1780, for six months for service in continental army. He was ordered to Springfield and then marched to West Point and joined a company in Colonel



Greaton's regiment of General Nixon's brigade. Soon after was transferred to the Light Infantry under General Lafayette, Captain Haskell's company and Colonel Gimmatt's regiment with which he continued to the fall of 1780, when he returned to his former company from which he was discharged.

William Ward testifies to service with Charles Hastings from May, 1776, in Captain Sargent's company.

Jonas Rice of Ashburnham testifies to service with Charles Hastings in Captain Willson's company from June, 1777. Says that while at Providence they were quartered in the college.

JOSEPH GIBBS, son of Joseph and Hannah (Howe) Gibbs, was born October 12, 1756. During the Revolution, he resided in Princeton and removed to this town previous to 1786. Commencing in May, 1775, he served eight months in the siege of Boston in the company of Captain Adam Wheeler in Colonel Doolittle's regiment. Seven companies of Colonel Doolittle's regiment, including the company of Captain Wheeler, were engaged in the battle of Bunker Hill, and of the regiment nine were wounded. The name of Joseph Gibbs, of Princeton, is borne on the rolls of those who served eight months in the siege of Boston. Many in this service reënlisted and served under Washington at New York, but the date of his return to Princeton does not appear. In July, 1780, he enlisted for three months in the company of Captain Ephraim Stearns in Colonel John Rand's regiment. This service was at West Point and King's Ferry and a part of the time under the immediate command of Washington. In the same service was Jonathan Samson, Andrew Winter, Jr., Thomas Gibson, Ebenezer Wallis and Reuben Rice, who were subsequently his neighbors in Ashburnham.

DAVID WALLIS was born in Lunenburg October 15, 1760. He removed to this town about 1795, where he resided until his death.



I. He alleges that in September, 1777, he enlisted in a company of militia under Captain Bellows and he thinks Colonel Bellows of Walpole, New Hampshire, was in command of the regiment. He enlisted for one month, marched to Fort Edward via Northfield and Bennington and was there when Burgoyne surrendered.

II. In April, 1778, he enlisted at Lunenburg in militia company of Captain Merick of Princeton of Colonel Stearns' regiment for three months. Marched to Dorchester and then to Castle William in Boston harbor. There were two companies of militia and one of continental artillery on the island.

III. In April, 1779, he enlisted at Lunenburg for three months in Captain Joshua Martin's company of Colonel Jones' regiment and served at Castle William. They were employed in building fortifications. During this service the artillery company was ordered to Rhode Island for a few days. He was ordered several times to Governor's island.

Nicholas Whiteman of Ashburnham testifies that he served with David Wallis, on Castle island from April, 1778.

Thomas Gibson of Ashburnham testifies to service with David Wallis in Captain Martin's company in 1779 at Castle William.

CYRUS FAIRBANKS was born in Harvard, May 29, 1752, and removed to Ashburnham, 1788, where he died at the advanced age of one hundred years, June 18, 1852. He gives an account of three terms of service while residing in Harvard.

I. He alleges that on April 19, 1775, then residing in Harvard, he volunteered to oppose the British then marching on Concord. He proceeded to Concord and thence to Cambridge. After remaining there about a week enlisted as a drummer for eight months in the Massachusetts militia company of Captain Jonathan Davis in Colonel Asa Whitcomb's regiment and served out full



term. He was first quartered on Cambridge river about a mile from the college and afterward on Prospect Hill.

II. In the month of September, 1776, he again enlisted at Harvard for two months as a drummer in the militia company of Captain Hill of Colonel Converse's regiment. Marched via Worcester, New Haven, Fairfield and White Plains to Dobb's Ferry, where he remained until his time was out. He says he served as drum-major during this term. The regiment was employed in transporting supplies up the river.

III. In the month of September, 1777, when Burgoyne was advancing he enlisted at Harvard for one month. Marched to Petersham where his company was organized and he chosen corporal in militia company of Captain Hill, he thought. He marched to Fort Edward passing through Bennington; remained in service entire term of his enlistment.

JOSHUA FLETCHER was born in Westford February 22, 1760, and removed to this town about 1810. He was a resident of Westford during the following service :

I. He alleges that he first entered service for seven months in Captain Abisha Brown's company of Colonel Whitney's regiment of Massachusetts forces and served at Nantasket island in the harbor of Boston to the end of his term.

II. He next served at Boston three months under Captain John Minot.

III. He next entered the army on the continental establishment, February, 1777, for three years and was mustered at Boston and proceeded in Captain Philip Thomas' company of Colonel Marshall's regiment of Massachusetts line to Ticonderoga and was at Fort Miller, Saratoga, Valley Forge and White Plains. He served one year and eight months when he was taken sick with a fever and a sore on his breast and was furloughed until he should recover. He did not recover until after the close of the war and was never able to rejoin the army. The following is a copy of the leave granted.



CAMP AT WHITE PLAINS, August 29, 1778.

His excellency approves that Joshua Fletcher, soldier in Col. Thomas Marshall's regiment of Massachusetts Bay State shall have leave of absence until the recovery of his health and spirits and then to return to his duty.

The BARON DE KALB  
M. G<sup>l</sup>.

JOSEPH MERRIAM was born in Woburn February 3, 1763, and lived in Lexington and Bedford during the war. It appears that he removed from Bedford to Ashburnham 1784, and remained several years when he removed to Templeton and subsequently returned to Ashburnham.

I. He alleges that in the fall of 1779 he enlisted for two months in company of Captain Samuel Heald of Carlisle in Colonel John Jacob's regiment. He marched to Providence where they encamped about three weeks and then marched to Tiverton and when the British left Rhode Island they went over Howland's Ferry to Butt's Hill where he remained until discharged in November, 1779.

II. In 1780 he enlisted for six months in Lieutenant-Colonel Thompson's company as it was called, but it was commanded by Ensign Thayer, in Colonel Marshall's regiment—the Tenth Massachusetts. He joined the regiment at West Point where they were encamped for nearly three weeks, when he was detached with several others to King's Ferry and put under the orders of Colonel Brewer and employed in conveying troops and baggage over the river, after which he joined his regiment at Verplank's Point and proceeded with his regiment to New Jersey and after serving out his six months was discharged at West Point in January, 1781.

III. In 1781 the town of Bedford hired him to go into the continental service for three months. He was mustered in, he thinks, by Colonel Brown of Tewksbury and then proceeded to New York State and joined the army at Gallows Hill. He was



immediately put under orders of Colonel Procter, a militia officer, and went about seven miles to one Captain Knapp's farm to guard cattle, where he remained about three weeks when he returned to camp and was taken by Major Keyes, who was a deputy-quartermaster-general in care of forage, as his waiter. He was stationed at Peekskill and his quarters were near General Heath's. He remained on this duty during the remainder of his service.

Some of the revolutionary soldiers to whom pensions were granted had died before the date of any complete list that has been discovered. In 1840 there were remaining in this town thirteen revolutionary soldiers and three widows of soldiers who were pensioned.

Cyrus Fairbanks survived his venerable associates.

Lemuel Stimson	died September 22, 1840
Charlotte Lowe, widow of Dr. Lowe,	" May 5, 1841
Thomas Gibson	" June 11, 1841
David Clark	" July 5, 1841
Joshua Fletcher	" April 14, 1843
Jabez Marble	" December 23, 1843
Joseph Jewett	" May 3, 1847
Zilpah Rice, widow of Jonas Rice,	" July 22, 1847
John Bowman	" October 22, 1847
William Ward	" December 3, 1847
Jonathan Samson	" December 9, 1847
Margaret Townsend, widow of Reuben Townsend,	" March 20, 1848
Isaac Whitmore	" May 2, 1848
Joseph Merriam	" April 4, 1849
Charles Hastings	" November 28, 1850
Cyrus Fairbanks	" June 18, 1852



## CHAPTER VII.

### STATE RELATIONS, POLITICS, TOWN OFFICERS.

A SEASON OF DISQUIETUDE. — SHAYS' REVOLT. — THE LOYAL SENTIMENT OF ASHEURNHAM. — VOLUNTEERS TO SUPPRESS THE REVOLT. — ISAAC STEARNS' DIARY. — A BLOODLESS CAMPAIGN. — CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTIONS. — REPRESENTATION IN THE LEGISLATURE. — VOTE OF THE TOWN FOR GOVERNOR. — PROPOSED DIVISIONS OF THE COUNTY. — A LIST OF TOWN OFFICERS.

At the close of the Revolution the situation of the country was perilous and critical. The difficulties of a public nature were changed in character by the close of the war but were not removed and peace brought no immediate relief to the financial difficulties which had attended the prosecution of the war. The resources of the State were exhausted while the towns were groaning under the burden of debt. In the extremity of the hour, the most oppressive systems of taxation were adopted, and if strenuous measures were demanded by the necessities of the times they did not put money in the purse of the tax-payer. In continued efforts to pay the taxes incident to the times, individuals had suffered their liabilities to accumulate and creditors, seizing upon the agency of new laws and reëstablished courts, resorted to legal process in the collection of debts. The tax collector had scarcely drained the scanty income of the farm before the sheriff armed with executions demanded the remaining cow and frequently the homestead. For a season the wisdom of statesmen and a multitude of laws brought no relief.



During the continuance of the war, without matured forms of government or systems of laws, the people had been united and held together in a common purpose. With freedom came new responsibilities and grave embarrassments. The government was new and unfamiliar to the people, and at first they came in contact with the harsher and more exacting features of the laws. To them the new laws were little more than a code for the collection of debts and the courts were an agency for the oppression of the poor. Feeling the weight of their burdens and not apprehending their cause, the people became dissatisfied with their government and the officers chosen to administer it. The murmur of discontent was heard on every hand, but the unsatisfactory state of public affairs and the uncertainty of the future were only shadows in the deeper gloom of the poverty and debt in their homes. The people had bravely endured extreme hardships and now victorious in the field they were sadly disappointed with the early fruits of a freedom which had been secured by their service and sacrifice. For a season the destiny of the republic was evenly balanced between revolt inviting anarchy and liberty restrained by law. In common with the people at large the inhabitants of this town shared in the gloom and burdens of the hour, but through discouragement they did not lose faith in the final success of the government or countenance any disorderly conduct. The revolt under the leadership of Shays, Day and Shattuck was encouraged by the active and open support of many in this vicinity, but there is no evidence that any citizen of this town was ever found within the ranks of open revolt.

The theatre of Shays' rebellion was wholly outside of Ashburnham. A complete history of that ill-advised and irrational revolt would contain little, if any, reference to the people or the sentiment of this town. The compliment is



almost reciprocal, and these pages would contain no reference to the riotous proceedings if it could be shown that the inhabitants of Ashburnham, surrounded by the same difficulties and suffering the same hardships, did not give any expression of sympathy to the movement, or utter any complaints against the heavy burdens which oppressed the Commonwealth. It is reasonably certain that none from this town joined the revolt. And while there is no proof that any considerable portion of the inhabitants were in sympathy with it, there is evidence that they seriously considered the state of existing affairs. Yet their voice was not raised until the rebellion was crushed and the government left at liberty to answer their complaint. On the fourteenth of March, 1787, a full month after, the only remaining remnant of the revolt was dispersed at Petersham, the town met in a legal meeting.

To see if the town will take any method to become acquainted with the minds of our fellow citizens in this commonwealth concerning the choice of our officers to be employed in government the present year or pass any vote or votes that the town shall think proper under said article.

To see if it is any mind of the town that there is any matter of grievance worthy of notice which we suffer by reason of the present administration of government, and if it is the minds of the town that there is matter of grievance to see what method the town will take for redress of said grievance.

Voted to send a man to Worcester to meet other towns and chose Mr Jacob Willard.

It was moved to see if it was the mind of the town that there is matter of grievance that the people labor under and it passed in the affirmative.

The town having chosen Jacob Willard to represent them at the approaching session of the General Court, met again



in May to give their representative instruction, whereupon it was ordered that he be instructed :

- 1<sup>st</sup> To have the general court moved out of Boston.
- 2<sup>d</sup> To Endeavor that the Courts of Common Pleas be abolished.
- 3<sup>d</sup> To Endeavor that the salary men be lowered.
- 4<sup>th</sup> To prevent if possible a paper currency.
- 5<sup>th</sup> To continue the Tender Act for another year.
- 6<sup>th</sup> To Endeavor that a free pardon be held out to all those persons that have taken up arms against the government.

These instructions are simply a brief statement of the most prominent measures that were being advanced by many as a remedy for existing grievances. And while the Legislature was not removed from Boston, the salary of one officer, the governor, was reduced and a bill providing for a new emission of paper money was defeated. On the last of these instructions the town again took action at the next meeting. "Chose Jacob Willard, Joshua Holden and Captain Daniel Putnam to draft a petition requesting the governor and council to further reprieve or pardon Captain Job Shattuck and others now under sentence of death and that the petition be signed by the inhabitants individually." There were fourteen persons under sentence of death and among them Job Shattuck who was captured in the early progress of the revolt at his home in Groton.

In all of these proceedings of the town there is no exhibit of temper nor any apparent failure of candid consideration. The instructions to their representative are moderate and from their standpoint not unreasonable, and their request for an amelioration of the sentence of Shattuck and others might have been attended with censure of their riotous conduct. At all events the persons under sentence were



pardoned by those who had less reason for the exercise of clemency.

In the records for the year 1787 and again the following year is entered at length the formal oath of allegiance prescribed in the Constitution of the State and to it is subscribed the names of the selectmen, assessors, treasurer and constables of each year. The town that took this precaution to restrain insubordination and to secure a firmer loyalty to the State and the men who voluntarily subscribed their names to that form of an oath will never be suspected of being in sympathy with the revolt. If they petitioned for the pardon of the rebels it was more in the spirit of forgiveness and charity than from any existing or former approval of their conduct. The vote of the town for governor for four years commencing 1783 was substantially unanimous for James Bowdoin who was the representative of the law and order party. During these disturbances it is evident that the controlling element and the voice and influence of the town did not fail in the maintenance of an orderly conduct and of a firm loyalty to the State. While the revolt was sustained in other places our fathers assembled in the meeting-house Wednesday, January 17, 1787, and listened to a sermon by Mr. Cushing from the text, "That there be no breaking in nor going out, that there be no complaining in our streets. Happy is that people that is in such a case."

This was a season of great excitement. The laws were openly violated and defied in many places. The inhabitants of Ashburnham, impatient of the delay of a legal meeting, held informal meetings the following Friday and Monday. A company of thirteen men marched to the assistance of the militia. The details of this voluntary service are recorded in a diary kept many years by Isaac Stearns from which the following extracts are transcribed.



*Thursday*, January 18, 1787. I went to town to training or rather to try to get men to go to Worcester.

*Friday*. I went up to town meeting.

*Monday*. I went to town meeting.

*Thursday*. I went to town to see about getting men to go against the insurgents.

*Friday*, January 26, 1787. I set out with thirteen men and lodged at Richardson's in Leominster.

*Saturday*. Lodged at Patch's in Worcester.

*Sabbath night*. Lodged in Spencer at one Jenks.

*Monday night*. At Bugbee's in Brimfield.

*Tuesday night*. At Burt's in Springfield and

*Wednesday night*, also at Burt's.

*Thursday*, February 1. We marched through Chicopee, a parish of Springfield, to South Hadley and lodged at one Preston's.

*Friday night*. I was on guard.

*Saturday night*. About ten o'clock we marched from South Hadley to Amherst and made a little halt.

*Sabbath*, Feby 4. Marched through South Barre and lodged in Petersham.

*Monday*. Marched to Barre and lodged at Capt. Henry's.

*Tuesday*. Marched to Oakham and back to Henry's in Barre.

*Wednesday*. We exercised.

*Thursday*. I went about four miles after insurgents.

*Friday*. I chopped wood for Capt. Henry, at night I mounted guard.

*Saturday*. Came off guard. Afterwards did some writing.

*Sabbath*, February 11. I went to Barre meeting. Mr. Dana preached from Psalms 97: 1. In the afternoon we marched from Capt. Henry's to Dr. Strickland's who lived in one Nurse's house in Barre.

*Monday*. I walked down to Esqr Caldwell's.

*Tuesday*. I went on guard.

*Wednesday*. I came from guard. At eight o'clock at night we marched from Barre to Hardwick in water up mid leg and in



the rain and came to one Haskell's in Hardwick and there remaining part of the night, tarried Thursday; and Friday in the forenoon I chopped wood for Mr. Haskell. In the afternoon we marched back to Barre.

*Saturday.* I looked after Dr. Strickland's cattle.

*Sabbath, February 18.* I went on guard; came off Monday.

*Tuesday.* I went to Esqr Caldwell's and read in Worcester Magazine; afterwards drank some cider and returned to my quarters.

*Wednesday.* We marched to Rutland; there we were dismissed, about noon we set out and came through Princeton, a part of Hubbardston and through Westminster to Col. Rand's where the men lodged, but I came to Lieut. Munroe's in Ashburnham.

*Thursday.* I came home.

This was a bloodless yet an industrious campaign. From a military standpoint the results, so far as we know, were not particularly decisive, but as an exponent of the prevailing sentiment of the town at a season of discontent our little army of invasion made a most cheerful campaign, and as volunteers in the cause of law and order their service must be accredited to a patriotic impulse which commands our willing esteem.

In 1778 a Constitution for "the State of Massachusetts Bay" was submitted for the approval of the people and by them rejected. The necessity for a more stable and comprehensive form of government remained. In 1779 the General Court passed a resolve calling upon the voters to decide whether they would instruct their representatives to call a State convention to prepare and submit for their approval a form of Constitution. A convention was ordered and the Constitution then prepared was ratified by the people in 1780. In these proceedings the following votes will reflect the sentiment of this town.



May 7, 1779. Voted to have a new form of government as soon as may be. Also that our representative vote to have a State convention called for that purpose.

William Whitcomb was the representative at the time this vote was passed. There is no record of the choice of a delegate to the constitutional convention.

May 31, 1780. Voted to accept of the form of government as it now stands all except three articles. Accepted unanimously. The articles accepted against are the following: The third in the bill of rights, forty-seven for it as it now stands, and twelve against;— Chapter 2, Section first, article seventh, accepted with this amendment:— That the Governor by advice of his council have power to march the militia to any one of the neighboring or adjoining States in case of invasion in the recess of the General Court. Chapter first, section third, article fourth:— Two persons against it as it now stands.

The persons dissatisfied with the third article of the bill of rights were the Baptists who contended that there was injustice in the conditions which required them to contribute to the support of the standing or Congregational order unless they were members of some other society.

A convention of delegates was assembled in Boston in January, 1788, to cast the vote of Massachusetts on the question of the acceptance of the Constitution of the United States. The town of Ashburnham was represented in that distinguished body by Jacob Willard. While a majority of the convention finally cast the vote of Massachusetts in favor of the adoption of the Constitution, only seven of the fifty delegates from Worcester county voted in the affirmative. The name of Mr. Willard is found with the majority from this county.



In 1795, the town voted unanimously that it was inexpedient to revise the Constitution of the State, but in 1820, the town by a vote of sixty-three to seventeen deemed it expedient to call a convention for revision. In both instances the town voted with a majority of the whole vote of the State. In the convention which was assembled at this time the town was represented by Silas Willard. Of the fourteen proposed amendments the people of the State ratified nine. They are the numbers I to IX of amendments to the Constitution. The town of Ashburnham voted in the affirmative on all the proposed amendments except the fifth. This was one of the five which was rejected. The amendments, numbered X, XI, XII and XIII, were proposed by the Legislature and ratified by the people without the intervention of a convention. The votes of the people of this town were as follows :

X.	1831.	Affirmative, 104	Negative, 2
XI.	1833.	115	1
XII.	1836.	49	5
XIII.	1840.	145	38

In 1851, a proposition to call a convention for revision was submitted to the people and defeated. The vote of this town was 183 in favor of a convention and 138 opposed. The third convention of delegates was assembled 1853. In the preliminary vote 220 desired to call the convention and 118 were willing to continue the constitution without change. The measure having received a sufficient number of votes, the town was called upon to make choice of a delegate. Simeon Merritt was elected, receiving 153 votes to 118 for Reuben Townsend. This convention submitted to the people eight propositions. None of them were ratified. The vote of Ashburnham was 203 in favor and 146 opposed. By a light



vote the town voted with the majority in the State in ratifying the six amendments that were added in 1855 and no subsequent amendment has elicited a full vote or a very decided expression of opinion. In later years, the sentiment of the town has been expressed by printed ballots. But on the pending amendments in 1820, the vote was taken in a more captious manner. The warrant calling upon the inhabitants of Ashburnham to assemble announced that the vote would be taken in the following manner: "All the voters to be seated and when called upon to vote then all that vote to rise and stand up with their heads uncovered until they are counted and then sit down in their seats again with their heads covered." It was a rare display of brains both in the record and in the vote.

The relations of Ashburnham to the temporary forms of government, existing from 1774 to 1780, have been noticed in the Revolutionary History of the town. The first election under the Constitution in the autumn of 1780 was for a short term. At this election the town voted not to send a representative and continued of the same mind at the annual election the next spring. In fact, until the close of the century, Ashburnham was represented in only eight sessions of the Legislature, having voted thirteen times "not to send a representative this year." It should be borne in mind that until 1831, the State officers and the Legislature were elected in the spring, and that the General Court was convened the last Wednesday in May. To Jacob Willard was reserved the honor of being the first representative from this town under the Constitution. He was elected in 1782 and again in 1787, 1791 and 1792; William Whitecomb 1783 and Samuel Wilder 1788, 1796 and 1798. Every other year the town was not represented in the popular branch of the Legislature, and in 1798 Mr. Wilder died before the Legislature convened.



Beginning with the present century, Jacob Willard was again elected in 1801, and following a familiar precedent the next seven years the town voted not to send a representative. In 1809, Joseph Jewett was first chosen and reëlected in 1812, 1813, 1814, 1816, 1821, 1829. He was also elected in 1810, but immediately after the declaration of the vote the town from a chronic habit "voted not to send a representative this year." Notwithstanding the vote of the town, Mr. Jewett, having been elected, assumed the duties of the office. Elisha White represented the town 1815; Stephen Corey 1819; Ivers Jewett 1824; Abraham T. Lowe 1825; Charles Barrett 1828; Nathaniel Pierce 1830.

Simultaneous with the amendment of the Constitution in 1831, changing the time of election from the spring to November and continuing until the amendment of 1840, the town having 375 or more ratable polls was entitled to send two representatives. Commencing with the fall elections and winter sessions and continuing until the adoption of the district system in 1857, the town failed ten times to be represented.

The earlier failures to elect a representative arose as much from a sentiment of indifference as from any other cause, but at this time there was a livelier interest in political affairs and party lines were sharply defined. The attempt was annually made and an election failed only when the combined vote of the Democrats and anti-slavery party defeated the Whigs in securing a majority which was then necessary to elect. In 1850 the Whigs were not only prevented from sending a representative but witnessed the election of a political opponent. During this period the following persons were elected for the session of the years ensuing :

1831. Nathaniel Pierce,	Hosea Stone.
1832. Nathaniel Pierce,	Hosea Stone.
1833. Hosea Stone,	Asahel Corey.



1834.	Asahel Corey,	Kilburn Harwood.
1835.	Asahel Corey,	Kilburn Harwood.
1836.	Asahel Corey,	Reuben Townsend.
1837.	Reuben Townsend,	Stephen Cushing.
1838.	Reuben Townsend,	No choice.
1840.	George G. Parker.	
1841.	George G. Parker.	
1845.	John C. Glazier.	
1850.	Ivers Adams.	
1851.	Joel Litch.	
1854.	Edward S. Flint.	
1855.	Ohio Whitney, Jr.	
1856.	Joseph P. Rice.	

In the district system of representation Ashburnham was classed with Winchendon until 1876. The representatives have been as follows :

1857.	Jacob B. Harris	of Winchendon.
1858.	Josiah D. Crosby	of Ashburnham.
1859.	William Murdock	of Winchendon.
1860.	Albert H. Andrews	of Ashburnham.
1861.	Nelson D. White	of Winchendon.
1862.	Thomas Boutelle	of Ashburnham.
1863.	Giles H. Whitney	of Winchendon.
1864.	George C. Winchester	of Ashburnham.
1865.	Giles H. Whitney	of Winchendon.
1866.	George E. Fisher	of Ashburnham.
1867.	Windsor N. White	of Winchendon.
1868.	George H. Barrett	of Ashburnham.
1869.	William L. Woodcock	of Winchendon.
1870.	Orlando Mason	of Winchendon.
1871.	Albert G. Sinclair	of Winchendon.
1872.	Austin Whitney	of Ashburnham.
1873.	Charles A. Loud	of Winchendon.
1874.	Wilbur F. Whitney	of Ashburnham.
1875.	Charles A. Loud	of Winchendon.



Under a revision of the districts Ashburnham was classed with Gardner, Winchendon, Westminster and Princeton and privileged to send two representatives.

1876. Simeon Merritt of Ashburnham and Wilder P. Clark of Winchendon.
1877. C. Webster Bush of Gardner and Artemas Merriam of Westminster.
1878. Wilder P. Clark of Winchendon and William H. Brown of Princeton.
1879. Edwin J. Cushing of Gardner and George W. Eddy of Ashburnham.
1880. Giles H. Whitney of Winchendon and J. Henry Miller of Westminster.
1881. John D. Edgell of Gardner and John B. Fay of Princeton.
1882. Walter O. Parker of Ashburnham and Wilder P. Clark of Winchendon.
1883. Roderick R. Bent of Gardner and Edwin L. Burnham of Westminster.
1884. Roderick R. Bent of Gardner and Charles J. Rice of Winchendon.
1885. Charles J. Rice of Winchendon and Herbert S. Stratton of Gardner.

The vote for governor at one hundred and five elections presents many suggestions concerning the growth and sentiment of the town. The vote for presidential electors being substantially a repetition of the vote for governor the same year affords no additional information. If, for a few years early in the present century, the town evinced an unsteadiness of purpose, the political sentiment of Ashburnham has been mainly in sympathy with the Federal, Whig and Republican parties.



Year	Name of Candidate	No. of Votes	Name of Candidate	No. of Votes	Name of Candidate	No. of Votes	Name of Candidate	No. of Votes
1780	Hancock	25	Bowdoin	10				
1781	Hancock	22	Bowdoin	2				
1782	No record of a vote.							
1783	Bowdoin	14	Lincoln	2	Hancock	0		
1784	Bowdoin	22	Hancock	1				
1785	Bowdoin	24						
1786	Bowdoin	31						
1787	Hancock	84	Lincoln	4				
1788	Hancock	29	Gerry	32				
1789	Hancock	48	Lincoln	7	Bowdoin	1		
1790	Hancock	37						
1791	Hancock	45						
1792	Hancock	25	Phillips	9				
1793	Hancock	46						
1794	Adams	57	Sumner	10				
1795	Adams	46	Cushing		Scattering	1		
1796	Sumner	38	Adams	18				
1797	Sumner	47	Sullivan	31				
1798	Sumner	48						
1799	Sullivan	49						
1800	Gerry	86	Strong	25				
1801	Strong	33	Gerry	60				
1802	Strong	63	Gerry	44	Scattering	1		
1803	Strong	64	Gerry	32				
1804	Strong	61	Sullivan	31				
1805	Strong	68	Sullivan	59	Scattering	1		
1806	Strong	75	Sullivan	75				
1807	Strong	84	Sullivan	59	Scattering	1		
1808	Gore	86	Sullivan	51	Scattering	4		
1809	Gore	92	Lincoln	47				
1810	Gore	98	Gerry	50	Scattering	1		
1811	Gore	89	Gerry	54				
1812	Strong	122	Gerry	50	Scattering	1		
1813	Strong	117	Varnum	49				
1814	Strong	117	Dexter	47				
1815	Strong	119	Dexter	54				
1816	Brooks	131	Dexter	56				
1817	Brooks	122	Dearborn	42	Scattering	1		
1818	Brooks	107	Crowninshield	29				
1819	Brooks	111	Crowninshield	33	Scattering	1		
1820	Brooks	119	Eustis	48				
1821	Brooks	110	Eustis	37				
1822	Brooks	104	Eustis	42				
1823	Otis	116	Eustis	75				
1824	Lathrop	119	Eustis	95				
1825	Lincoln	139			Scattering	6		
1826	Lincoln	113	Lloyd	7	Scattering	4		
1827	Lincoln	133			Scattering	1		
1828	Lincoln	116	Morton	10				
1829	Lincoln	90	Morton	41				
1830	Lincoln	77	Morton	65	Scattering	4		



Year	Name of Candidate	No. of Votes	Name of Candidate	No. of Votes	Name of Candidate	No. of Votes	Name of Candidate	No. of Votes
1831	Lincoln	101	Morton	53	Scattering	1		
1831	Lincoln	103	Morton	52	Scattering	3		
1832	Lincoln	152	Morton	74				
1833	Davis	87	Morton	66	Scattering	16		
1834	Lincoln	127	Fisher	59				
1835	Everett	98	Morton	75				
1836	Everett	139	Morton	95				
1837	Everett	141	Morton	74				
1838	Everett	157	Morton	106	Scattering	15		
1839	Everett	162	Morton	152				
1840	Davis	204	Morton	139	Scattering	12		
1841	Davis	160	Morton	111	Boltwood	28		
1842	Davis	160	Morton	133	Sewall	31		
1843	Briggs	159	Morton	138	Sewall	41		
1844	Briggs	164	Bancroft	126	Sewall	46		
1845	Briggs	130	Davis	83	Sewall	37		
1846	Briggs	127	Davis	86	Sewall	35		
1847	Briggs	123	Cushing	77	Sewall	37		
1848	Briggs	102	Cushing	69	Phillips	83		
1849	Briggs	124	Boutwell	79	Phillips	58		
1850	Briggs	95	Boutwell	90	Phillips	91		
1851	Winthrop	128	Boutwell	111	Palfrey	97		
1852	Clifford	122	Bishop	120	Mann	112		
1853	Washburn	136	Bishop	106	Wilson	101		
1854	Gardner	134	Bishop	38	Wilson	59	Washburn	63
1855	Rockwell	164	Beach	96	Gardner	108	Walley	18
1856	Gardner	251	Beach	85	Scattering	10		
1857	Banks	176	Gardner	91	Beach	73	Scattering	5
1858	Banks	182	Lawrence	56	Beach	64		
1859	Banks	125	Butler	98				
1860	Andrew	282	Beach	99				
1861	Andrew	184	Davis	59				
1862	Andrew	210	Devens	109				
1863	Andrew	160	Paine	39				
1864	Andrew	278	Paine	83				
1865	Bullock	185	Couch	32				
1866	Bullock	231	Sweetser	40				
1867	Bullock	253	Adams	139				
1868	Clafin	295	Adams	89				
1869	Clafin	169	Adams	81				
1870	Clafin	233	Adams	111				
1871	Washburn	144	Pitman	39				
1872	Washburn	268	Bird	71				
1873	Washburn	105	Gaston	97				
1874	Talbot	215	Gaston	154				
1875	Rice	157	Gaston	136				
1876	Rice	186	Adams	107	Baker	61		
1877	Rice	108	Gaston	77				
1878	Talbot	185	Butler	96				
1879	Long	181	Butler	80				
1880	Long	227	Thompson	65				
1881	Long	113	Thompson	24				
1882	Bishop	178	Butler	97				
1883	Robinson	210	Butler	133				
1884	Robinson	219	Endicott	96				
1885	Robinson	149	Prince	67	Lothrop	15		



The county of Worcester was incorporated when the territory of Ashburnham was an unnamed wilderness. The relations of this town to the county was an inheritance in which the inhabitants had no voice, but they did not long remain silent after they became members of the corporation. Situated on the borders of the county and remote from the shire town, the voters of Ashburnham have debated many projects concerning a change of county lines or the creation of a new county. Some of these have been entertained with considerable favor. The discussion began one hundred years ago and has been renewed at frequent intervals. The old county remains unchanged and so do the advocates of a new one. One movement began in 1784 and extended through several years. To the first convention this town voted not to send a delegate, but in a convention held in Lunenburg in 1785, the town was represented by Samuel Wilder. At this time it was finally proposed to create a new county comprising towns in Worcester and Middlesex counties. To this proposal Ashburnham finally dissented and withdrew from the movement.

In 1786, the town voted not to join with the petitioners of Petersham for a new county but were found ready to encourage the movement for a division of Worcester county which occurred soon after. To a convention held in Leominster in 1794 the town sent Samuel Wilder. The convention recommended the creation of a new county and this town chose Abraham Lowe, Samuel Wilder and Jacob Willard to petition the General Court. As a result of the solicitation of this and other towns the General Court in 1798 submitted the question to the voters of the county. The vote of this town was sixty-four in favor of a division of the county and five opposed. Immediately after the vote was taken in the county a convention was held in Templeton in



which the town was represented by Joseph Jewett, but the measure in the mean time was defeated and the town took no action on the report of the delegate to the convention. Concerning the subsequent efforts that have been made to divide the county of Worcester the sentiment of the town of Ashburnham was divided but the county remains with its generous domain and extensive boundaries.

**MAGISTRATES.**—In colonial times the Justices of the Peace were commissioned in the name of the king and the office was regarded as one of marked distinction. Upon the adoption of the State Constitution the appointment was vested in the governor, yet the duties and prerogatives of the office were not materially changed and a peculiar dignity continued to attend the office. In later years, appointments have been bestowed with greater freedom and the number of persons qualified for the position, both by education and a knowledge of legal forms and proceedings, is so numerous that the magistrates of the present time, surrounded by men of equal influence and eminence, do not enjoy the distinction that once attended the position. The only person appointed to this office in this town by royal favor, was Samuel Wilder. For many years he was the only magistrate in Ashburnham. Joshua Smith, who came to this town in 1785, was styled Esquire Smith and before he removed hither he had been a Justice of the Peace in Southborough, but no record of his appointment after his removal to this town has been found. In the following list of the Justices of the Peace the first column gives the date of the first appointment. At the close of seven years the commissions generally have been renewed.

1772.	Samuel Wilder	died May 9, 1798
1796.	Jacob Willard	died February 22, 1808
1798.	Abraham Lowe	died October 23, 1834
1811.	George R. Cushing	died February 2, 1851



1813.	Joseph Jewett	died May 3, 1846
1814.	Elisha White	died June 14, 1817
1820.	Stephen Corey	died October 7, 1823
1821.	Ivers Jewett	removed from town 1827
1825.	Silas Willard	commission expired October 1, 1852
1826.	Henry Adams	removed from town 1830
1827.	Hosea Stone	commission expired February 1, 1841
1830.	Nathaniel Pierce	“ “ June 12, 1851
1837.	George G. Parker	died December 14, 1852
1839.	Kilburn Harwood	removed from town 1845
1839.	Reuben Townsend	commission expired Feb. 3, 1860
1844.	Enoch Whitmore	died September 13, 1860
1847.	Charles Stearns	died July 11, 1874
1850.	John Petts—Trial Justice	commission expired 1857
1853.	Jerome W. Foster	died March 23, 1871
1853.	George Rockwood	died December 20, 1864
1855.	John L. Cummings	
1857.	Charles W. Burrage	removed from town 1859
1857.	William P. Ellis	
1857.	Albert H. Andrews	entered army 1861
1857.	Daniels Ellis, Jr.	
1858.	Ohio Whitney, Jr.	died February 6, 1879
1858.	Ivers Adams	commission expired May 16, 1872
1859.	William F. Burrage	removed from town 1867
1862.	Alfred Miller	removed from town 1863
1864.	Wilbur F. Whitney	
1867.	Alfred Whitmore	died January 4, 1873
1869.	Marshall Wetherbee	
1871.	George W. Eddy	
1873.	Austin Whitney	commission expired January 7, 1880
1873.	Melvin O. Adams	removed from town 1876
1873.	John H. Wilkins, Notary Public	
1877.	S. Joseph Bradlee	removed from town 1884
1878.	Samuel G. Newton	died July 23, 1884
1880.	George C. Foster	



*A list of Moderators of the Annual March meeting, Town Clerks, Selectmen and Assessors, from the incorporation of the town to the present time.*

1765. Moderator, Samuel Fellows. Clerk, William Whitecomb.  
Selectmen, Samuel Fellows, Tristram Cheney, John Rich,  
James Coleman, Jonathan Gates.  
Assessors, Samuel Wilder, William Joyner, John Bates.
1766. Moderator, Samuel Fellows. Clerk, William Whitecomb.  
Selectmen, William Whitecomb, Tristram Cheney, John  
Rich, Elisha Coolidge, John Jones.  
Assessors, the Selectmen.
1767. Moderator, Tristram Cheney. Clerk, William Joyner.  
Selectmen, Tristram Cheney, Jona. Gates, John Kiblinger,  
John Jones, Samuel Wilder.  
Assessors, William Whitecomb, Samuel Wilder, Tristram  
Cheney.
1768. Moderator, Samuel Fellows. Clerk, William Joyner.  
Selectmen, Tristram Cheney, William Whitecomb, Samuel  
Fellows.  
Assessors, the Selectmen.
1769. Moderator, Samuel Fellows. Clerk, Samuel Wilder.  
Selectmen, John Kiblinger, Nathan Melvin, Samuel Fel-  
lows.  
Assessors, Samuel Wilder, William Joyner, William  
Whitecomb.
1770. Moderator, Samuel Fellows. Clerk, Samuel Wilder.  
Selectmen, Samuel Fellows, John Kiblinger, Ephraim  
Stone.  
Assessors, Samuel Wilder, William Whitecomb, Nathan  
Melvin.
1771. Moderator, Samuel Fellows. Clerk, Samuel Wilder.  
Selectmen, Ephraim Stone, Samuel Wilder, John Kib-  
linger.  
Assessors, Samuel Wilder, William Whitecomb, Nathan  
Melvin.



1772. Moderator, William Whitecomb. Clerk, Samuel Wilder.  
Selectmen, Samuel Wilder, Ephraim Stone, John Kib-  
linger.  
Assessors, Samuel Wilder, William Whitecomb, John  
Willard.
1773. Moderator, William Whitecomb. Clerk, Samuel Wilder.  
Selectmen, Samuel Wilder, Ephraim Stone, John Kib-  
linger.  
Assessors, Samuel Wilder, William Whitecomb, Jonathan  
Taylor.
1774. Moderator, William Whitecomb. Clerk, Samuel Wilder.  
Selectmen, Samuel Wilder, John Willard, Jonathan Taylor.  
Assessors, the Selectmen.
1775. Moderator, Deliverance Davis. Clerk, Jacob Willard.  
Selectmen, John Kiblinger, Samuel Nichols, Jonathan  
Gates, Oliver Stone, Amos Kendell.  
Assessors, John Adams, John Conn, Ebenezer Hemen-  
way.
1776. Moderator, William Whitecomb. Clerk, Samuel Wilder.  
Selectmen, William Whitecomb, John Kiblinger, Oliver  
Willard.  
Assessors, Samuel Wilder, Jacob Willard, John Adams.
1777. Moderator, William Whitecomb. Clerk, Samuel Wilder.  
Selectmen, Samuel Wilder, John Willard, Jonathan Sam-  
son, Jonathan Taylor, Abijah Joslin.  
Assessors, Samuel Wilder, William Wilder, Enos Jones,  
Joseph Metcalf, Francis Lane.
1778. Moderator, William Whitecomb. Clerk, Samuel Wilder.  
Selectmen, John Conn, Oliver Willard, William Benjamin.  
Assessors, Samuel Wilder, William Whitecomb, John  
Adams.
1779. Moderator, William Whitecomb. Clerk, Samuel Wilder.  
Selectmen, John Conn, Oliver Willard, Amos Dickerson.  
Assessors, Samuel Wilder, William Whitecomb, Jacob  
Harris.
1780. Moderator, Joseph Whitmore. Clerk, Samuel Wilder.  
Selectmen, Samuel Wilder, Isaac Merriam, Francis Lane.



- Assessors, Samuel Wilder, Jacob Harris, William Pollard.
1781. Moderator, George Dana. Clerk, Samuel Wilder.  
Selectmen, Jacob Harris, Hezekiah Corey, Enos Jones.  
Assessors, David Stedman, Jacob Harris, William Pollard.
1782. Moderator, Jacob Willard. Clerk, Samuel Wilder.  
Selectmen, Samuel Wilder, Hezekiah Corey, Ebenezer  
Conant.  
Assessors, Jacob Harris, Samuel Wilder, David Stedman.
1783. Moderator, Jacob Willard. Clerk, Samuel Wilder.  
Selectmen, Samuel Wilder, Hezekiah Corey, Jacob Wil-  
lard.  
Assessors, Samuel Wilder, Jacob Harris, William Pollard.
1784. Moderator, Jacob Willard. Clerk, Samuel Wilder.  
Selectmen, Samuel Wilder, Hezekiah Corey, Francis  
Lane.  
Assessors, Samuel Wilder, Francis Lane, Jacob Harris.
1785. Moderator, Jacob Willard. Clerk, Samuel Wilder.  
Selectmen, Samuel Wilder, Samuel Foster, John Conn.  
Assessors, Jacob Harris, William Pollard, Jacob Willard.
1786. Moderator, Jacob Willard. Clerk, Samuel Wilder.  
Selectmen, Joshua Smith, Samuel Wilder, Samuel Foster.  
Assessors, Jacob Harris, William Pollard, Oliver Hough-  
ton.
1787. Moderator, Jacob Willard. Clerk, Samuel Wilder.  
Selectmen, John Adams, Amos Dickerson, Jacob Kiblinger.  
Assessors, Jacob Willard, Jacob Harris, John Adams.
1788. Moderator, Joshua Smith. Clerk, Samuel Wilder.  
Selectmen, John Adams, Jacob Kiblinger, Samuel Foster.  
Assessors, John Adams, John Abbott, Oliver Houghton.
1789. Moderator, Jacob Willard. Clerk, Samuel Wilder.  
Selectmen, John Adams, Jacob Kiblinger, Samuel Foster.  
Assessors, John Adams, Jacob Harris, Jacob Willard.
1790. Moderator, Jacob Willard. Clerk, Samuel Wilder.  
Selectmen, Samuel Foster, Samuel Wilder, Jacob Willard.  
Assessors, the Selectmen.



1791. Moderator, Jacob Willard. Clerk, Samuel Wilder.  
Selectmen, Jacob Willard, John Gates, Jacob Kiblinger.  
Assessors, Jacob Willard, Jacob Harris, Jacob Kiblinger.
1792. Moderator, Jacob Willard. Clerk, Abraham Lowe.  
Selectmen, Samuel Foster, Francis Lane, Enos Jones.  
Assessors, Jacob Harris, Samuel Wilder, William Pollard.
1793. Moderator, Samuel Wilder. Clerk, Abraham Lowe.  
Selectmen, Samuel Wilder, Joseph Jewett, Jacob Kiblinger.  
Assessors, the Selectmen.
1794. Moderator, Samuel Wilder. Clerk, Abraham Lowe.  
Selectmen, Francis Lane, Enos Jones, Ebenezer Munroe.  
Assessors, Samuel Wilder, Jacob Harris, Jacob Willard.
1795. Moderator, Jacob Willard. Clerk, Abraham Lowe.  
Selectmen, Jacob Kiblinger, Joseph Jewett, John Conn.  
Assessors, Matthias Mossman, Joseph Jewett, Caleb Ward.
1796. Moderator, Jacob Harris. Clerk, Abraham Lowe.  
Selectmen, Jacob Willard, Samuel Wilder, Caleb Ward.  
Assessors, Matthias Mossman, Jacob Harris, John Adams.
1797. Moderator, Jacob Willard. Clerk, Abraham Lowe.  
Selectmen, Jacob Kiblinger, John Gates, William Stearns.  
Assessors, Matthias Mossman, Abraham Lowe, Elisha White.
1798. Moderator, Jacob Willard. Clerk, Abraham Lowe.  
Selectmen, John Gates, William Stearns, Abraham Lowe.  
Assessors, Samuel Wilder, Joseph Jewett, Jacob Harris.
1799. Moderator, Joseph Jewett. Clerk, Elisha White.  
Selectmen, Elisha White, David Cushing, Jacob Kiblinger.  
Assessors, David Cushing, Joseph Jewett, Jacob Kiblinger.
1800. Moderator, Joseph Jewett. Clerk, Joseph Jewett.  
Selectmen, Joseph Jewett, Jacob Kiblinger, John Adams,  
Hezekiah Corey, Caleb Ward.  
Assessors, Joseph Jewett, John Adams, Jacob Kiblinger.



1801. Moderator, Jacob Willard. Clerk, Joseph Jewett.  
Selectmen, Jacob Willard, Ebenezer Munroe, Jacob Constantine.  
Assessors, Jacob Willard, Jacob Constantine, Elisha White.
1802. Moderator, Ebenezer Munroe. Clerk, Joseph Jewett.  
Selectmen, Ebenezer Munroe, John Gates, David Cushing.  
Assessors, Joseph Jewett, David Cushing, Samuel Cotting.
1803. Moderator, Ebenezer Munroe. Clerk, Joseph Jewett.  
Selectmen, David Cushing, John Gates, Caleb Ward.  
Assessors, Joseph Jewett, David Cushing, John Adams.
1804. Moderator, Ebenezer Munroe. Clerk, Joseph Jewett.  
Selectmen, Ebenezer Munroe, Amos Pierce, Hezekiah Corey, Jr.  
Assessors, Elisha White, Hezekiah Corey, Jr., Silas Willard.
1805. Moderator, Jacob Willard. Clerk, Joseph Jewett.  
Selectmen, Amos Pierce, Hezekiah Corey, Jr., Thomas Hobart.  
Assessors, Elisha White, David Cushing, Samuel Gates.
1806. Moderator, Jacob Willard. Clerk, Joseph Jewett.  
Selectmen, Thomas Hobart, Joseph Jewett, Lemuel Stimson.  
Assessors, Elisha White, Silas Willard, Samuel Gates.
1807. Moderator, Jacob Willard. Clerk, Joseph Jewett.  
Selectmen, Thomas Hobart, Joseph Jewett, Lemuel Stimson.  
Assessors, Elisha White, Silas Willard, John Adams, Jr.
1808. Moderator, Caleb Wilder. Clerk, Joseph Jewett.  
Selectmen, Joseph Jewett, Thomas Hobart, Lemuel Stimson.  
Assessors, Elisha White, Silas Willard, John Adams, Jr.
1809. Moderator, Elisha White. Clerk, Joseph Jewett.  
Selectmen, Joseph Jewett, Thomas Hobart, Lemuel Stimson.  
Assessors, Elisha White, Silas Willard, John Adams, Jr.



1810. Moderator, Caleb Wilder. Clerk, Joseph Jewett.  
Selectmen, Elisha White, Silas Willard, Samuel Gates.  
Assessors, the Selectmen.
1811. Moderator, Elisha White. Clerk, Joseph Jewett.  
Selectmen, Elisha White, Silas Willard, Stephen Corey.  
Assessors, Joseph Jewett, Silas Willard, Ebenezer  
Munroe.
1812. Moderator, Caleb Wilder. Clerk, Joseph Jewett.  
Selectmen, Joseph Jewett, Silas Willard, Stephen Corey.  
Assessors, the Selectmen.
1813. Moderator, Caleb Wilder. Clerk, Joseph Jewett.  
Selectmen, Silas Willard, John Willard, Asa Woods.  
Assessors, the Selectmen.
1814. Moderator, Caleb Wilder. Clerk, Joseph Jewett.  
Selectmen, Elisha White, John Willard, William J.  
Lawrence.  
Assessors, the Selectmen.
1815. Moderator, George R. Cushing. Clerk, Joseph Jewett.  
Selectmen, Joseph Jewett, John Willard, John Adams, Jr.  
Assessors, Elisha White, Silas Willard, Stephen Corey.
1816. Moderator, Caleb Wilder. Clerk, Ivers Jewett.  
Selectmen, Joseph Jewett, John Willard, John Adams, Jr.  
Assessors, Elisha White, Stephen Corey, Jacob Harris, Jr.
1817. Moderator, Caleb Wilder. Clerk, Ivers Jewett.  
Selectmen, John Willard, John Adams, Jr., Stephen  
Corey.  
Assessors, Elisha White, Stephen Corey, Jacob Harris, Jr.
1818. Moderator, George R. Cushing. Clerk, Ivers Jewett.  
Selectmen, Joseph Jewett, Stephen Corey, John Adams, Jr.  
Assessors, the Selectmen.
1819. Moderator, Joseph Jewett. Clerk, Ivers Jewett.  
Selectmen, Stephen Corey, John Adams, Jr., Thomas  
Hobart.  
Assessors, Stephen Corey, Silas Willard, Joel Foster.
1820. Moderator, George R. Cushing. Clerk, Ivers Jewett.  
Selectmen, Joseph Jewett, Thomas Hobart, John  
Adams, Jr.



- Assessors, Joseph Jewett, John Adams, Jr., Silas Willard.
1821. Moderator, Joseph Jewett. Clerk, Ivers Jewett.  
Selectmen, Joseph Jewett, Thomas Hobart, John Adams, Jr.
- Assessors, Joseph Jewett, Silas Willard, Hezekiah Corey.
1822. Moderator, Joseph Jewett. Clerk, Ivers Jewett.  
Selectmen, John Adams, Jr., Hosea Stone, Timothy Stearns.
- Assessors, the Selectmen.
1823. Moderator, George R. Cushing. Clerk, Ivers Jewett.  
Selectmen, Joseph Jewett, Silas Willard, Reuben Townsend, Jr.
- Assessors, the Selectmen.
1824. Moderator, Joseph Jewett. Clerk, Joseph Jewett.  
Selectmen, Silas Willard, Hezekiah Corey, John Adams, Jr.
- Assessors, Silas Willard, John Adams, Jr., Enoch Whitmore.
1825. Moderator, George R. Cushing. Clerk, Hosea Stone.  
Selectmen, Charles Barrett, Elias Lane, Oliver Marble.
- Assessors, Joseph Jewett, Hosea Stone, Benjamin Barrett.
1826. Moderator, George R. Cushing. Clerk, Hosea Stone.  
Selectmen, Charles Barrett, Elias Lane, Samuel Dunster.
- Assessors, Hosea Stone, Enoch Whitmore, John Willard, Jr.
1827. Moderator, Joseph Jewett. Clerk, Hosea Stone.  
Selectmen, Charles Barrett, Reuben Townsend, Jr., Enoch Whitmore.
- Assessors, the Selectmen.
1828. Moderator, Joseph Jewett. Clerk, Hosea Stone.  
Selectmen, Charles Barrett, Reuben Townsend, Jr., Asahel Corey.
- Assessors, the Selectmen.
1829. Moderator, Joseph Jewett. Clerk, Hosea Stone.  
Selectmen, Asahel Corey, Thomas Bennett, Joseph Jewett.



Assessors, the Selectmen.

1830. Moderator, George R. Cushing. Clerk, Hosea Stone.  
Selectmen, Asahel Corey, Amos Pierce, Jr., Charles Stearns.

Assessors, the Selectmen.

1831. Moderator, Ebenezer Frost. Clerk, Hosea Stone.  
Selectmen, Asahel Corey, Amos Pierce, Jr., Charles Stearns.

Assessors, the Selectmen.

1832. Moderator, Ebenezer Frost. Clerk, Hosea Stone.  
Selectmen, Asahel Corey, Amos Pierce, Jr., Charles Stearns,

Assessors, the Selectmen.

1833. Moderator, Ebenezer Frost. Clerk, Charles Stearns.  
Selectmen, Amos Pierce, Jr., Jehiel Watkins, Kilburn Harwood.

Assessors, Asahel Corey, Amos Pierce, Jr., Charles Stearns.

1834. Moderator, Ebenezer Frost. Clerk, Charles Stearns.  
Selectmen, Kilburn Harwood, Reuben Townsend, Jr., Charles Davis.

Assessors, the Selectmen.

1835. Moderator, George R. Cushing. Clerk, Charles Stearns.  
Selectmen, Asahel Corey, Charles Davis, Ebenezer Frost.  
Assessors, the Selectmen.

1836. Moderator, Kilburn Harwood. Clerk, Charles Stearns.  
Selectmen, Asahel Corey, Ebenezer Frost, Jehiel Watkins.  
Assessors, the Selectmen.

1837. Moderator, Kilburn Harwood. Clerk, Charles Stearns.  
Selectmen, Asahel Corey, Kilburn Harwood, Charles Barrett.

Assessors, the Selectmen.

1838. Moderator, Kilburn Harwood. Clerk, Charles Stearns.  
Selectmen, Kilburn Harwood, Reuben Townsend, John C. Glazier.

Assessors, Nathaniel Pierce, Ebenezer Frost, Stephen Corey.



1839. Moderator, Kilburn Harwood. Clerk, Charles Stearns.  
Selectmen, John C. Glazier, Ebenezer Frost, Ohio Whitney.  
Assessors, the Selectmen.
1840. Moderator, Reuben Townsend. Clerk, Charles Stearns.  
Selectmen, George G. Parker, Reuben Townsend, Elias Lane.  
Assessors, the Selectmen.
1841. Moderator, Reuben Townsend. Clerk, Charles Stearns.  
Selectmen, George G. Parker, Reuben Townsend, Elias Lane.  
Assessors, the Selectmen.
1842. Moderator, Kilburn Harwood. Clerk, Charles Stearns.  
Selectmen, George G. Parker, Elias Lane, Harvey Brooks.  
Assessors, the Selectmen.
1843. Moderator, Ebenezer Frost. Clerk, Charles Stearns.  
Selectmen, Harvey Brooks, John C. Davis, Charles Barrett.  
Assessors, Hosea Green, Walter Russell, Jerome W. Foster.
1844. Moderator, Ebenezer Frost. Clerk, Charles Stearns.  
Selectmen, Charles Barrett, Kilburn Harwood, Ohio Whitney.  
Assessors, the Selectmen.
1845. Moderator, Ebenezer Frost. Clerk, Charles Stearns.  
Selectmen, George G. Parker, Ohio Whitney, Emery Fairbanks.  
Assessors, the Selectmen.
1846. Moderator, Gilman Jones. Clerk, Charles Stearns.  
Selectmen, Emery Fairbanks, Ohio Whitney, George G. Parker.  
Assessors, the Selectmen.
1847. Moderator, Ebenezer Frost. Clerk, Charles Stearns.  
Selectmen, George G. Parker, Ohio Whitney, Jerome W. Foster.  
Assessors, the Selectmen.



1848. Moderator, Ohio Whitney, Jr. Clerk, Charles Stearns.  
Selectmen, Jerome W. Foster, Charles Stearns, Antipas Maynard.  
Assessors, the Selectmen.
1849. Moderator, Ohio Whitney, Jr. Clerk, Charles Stearns.  
Selectmen, Jerome W. Foster, Antipas Maynard, John A. Conn.  
Assessors, the Selectmen.
1850. Moderator, Enoch Whitmore. Clerk, Charles Stearns.  
Selectmen, George G. Parker, John A. Conn, Ivers Adams.  
Assessors, Ohio Whitney, Enoch Whitmore, Pyam Burr.
1851. Moderator, Ohio Whitney, Jr. Clerk, Charles Stearns.  
Selectmen, George G. Parker, Ivers Adams, Jerome W. Foster.  
Assessors, the Selectmen.
1852. Moderator, Ohio Whitney, Jr. Clerk, Charles Stearns.  
Selectmen, Antipas Maynard, Joseph P. Rice, Walter Russell.  
Assessors, the Selectmen.
1853. Moderator, Enoch Whitmore. Clerk, Charles Stearns.  
Selectmen, Antipas Maynard, Joseph P. Rice, Jerome W. Foster.  
Assessors, the Selectmen.
1854. Moderator, Enoch Whitmore. Clerk, Charles Stearns.  
Selectmen, Jerome W. Foster, John A. Conn, Ohio Whitney, Jr.  
Assessors, the Selectmen.
1855. Moderator, Ohio Whitney, Jr. Clerk, Charles Stearns.  
Selectmen, Jerome W. Foster, Ohio Whitney, Jr., Henry Lawrence.  
Assessors, the Selectmen.
1856. Moderator, Joel H. Litch. Clerk, Charles Stearns.  
Selectmen, John A. Conn, Elliot Moore, Ohio Whitney, Jr.  
Assessors, the Selectmen.



1857. Moderator, Enoch Whitmore. Clerk, William P. Ellis.  
Selectmen, Elliot Moore, George S. Burrage, George  
Rockwood.  
Assessors, John A. Conn, Daniels Ellis, Jr., Ezra Randall.
1858. Moderator, Ohio Whitney, Jr. Clerk, William P. Ellis.  
Selectmen, George S. Burrage, Joel H. Litch, Addison A.  
Walker.  
Assessors, John A. Conn, Joel H. Litch, Perley Howe.
1859. Moderator, Ohio Whitney, Jr. Clerk, William P. Ellis.  
Selectmen, Addison A. Walker, Elliot Moore, Leonard  
Foster.  
Assessors, John A. Conn, Perley Howe, John G. Wood-  
ward.
1860. Moderator, Ohio Whitney, Jr. Clerk, Jerome W. Foster.  
Selectmen, Addison A. Walker, Leonard Foster, Simeon  
Merritt.  
Assessors, Perley Howe, Jerome W. Foster, John G.  
Woodward.
1861. Moderator, Ohio Whitney, Jr. Clerk, Jerome W. Foster.  
Selectmen, Simeon Merritt, Jesse Parker, Isaac D. Ward.  
Assessors, Jerome W. Foster, Perley Howe, Charles  
Winchester.
1862. Moderator, Ohio Whitney, Jr. Clerk, Jerome W. Foster.  
Selectmen, Jesse Parker, Isaac D. Ward, William P.  
Ellis.  
Assessors, the Selectmen.
1863. Moderator, Ohio Whitney, Jr. Clerk, Jerome W. Foster.  
Selectmen, Isaac D. Ward, Perley Howe, Elbridge Stim-  
son.  
Assessors, the Selectmen.
1864. Moderator, Ohio Whitney, Jr. Clerk, Jerome W. Foster.  
Selectmen, Ohio Whitney, Jr., Marshall Wetherbee,  
Nathaniel L. Eaton.  
Assessors, William P. Ellis, Joel H. Litch, Perley Howe.
1865. Moderator, Joel H. Litch. Clerk, Jerome W. Foster.



- Selectmen, Charles F. Rockwood, William F. Burrage,  
John G. Woodward.  
Assessors, Perley Howe, Joel H. Litch, Joel F. Metcalf.
1866. Moderator, Ohio Whitney, Jr. Clerk, Jerome W. Foster.  
Selectmen, Charles F. Rockwood, William F. Burrage,  
John G. Woodward.  
Assessors Joel H. Litch, Joel F. Metcalf, Marshall  
Wetherbee.
1867. Moderator, Harvey D. Jillson. Clerk, Jerome W. Foster.  
Selectmen, Charles F. Rockwood, Elbridge Stimson,  
Francis A. Whitney.  
Assessors, Joel H. Litch, William P. Ellis, Europe H.  
Fairbanks.
1868. Moderator, Ohio Whitney, Jr. Clerk, Jerome W. Foster.  
Selectmen, Elbridge Stimson, Jerome W. Foster, Addison  
A. Walker.  
Assessors, John L. Cummings, Austin Whitney, Luke  
Marble.
1869. Moderator, John B. Thompson. Clerk, Jerome W.  
Foster.  
Selectmen, Franklin Russell, Simeon Merritt, Nathaniel L.  
Eaton.  
Assessors, Newton Hayden, John L. Cummings, Theodore  
Greenwood.
1870. Moderator, Ohio Whitney, Jr. Clerk, Jerome W. Foster.  
Selectmen, Franklin Russell, Jesse Parker, Addison A.  
Walker.  
Assessors, Austin Whitney, John L. Cummings, Theodore  
Greenwood.
1871. Moderator, Ohio Whitney. Clerk, Jerome W. Foster.  
Selectmen, Franklin Russell, Jesse Parker, George E.  
Davis.  
Assessors, Austin Whitney, John L. Cummings, Theodore  
Greenwood.
1872. Moderator, Ohio Whitney. Clerk, Newton Hayden.  
Selectmen, Simeon Merritt, George E. Davis, Addison A.  
Walker.



Assessors, John L. Cummings, Theodore Greenwood,  
George C. Foster.

1873. Moderator, Ohio Whitney. Clerk, Newton Hayden.  
Selectmen, Simeon Merritt, John L. Cummings, George E.  
Davis.

Assessors, John L. Cummings, Theodore Greenwood,  
Jesse Parker.

1874. Moderator, Melvin O. Adams. Clerk, Newton Hayden.  
Selectmen, Simeon Merritt, Austin Whitney, Martin B.  
Lane.

Assessors, Austin Whitney, Walter R. Adams, Marshall  
Wetherbee.

1875. Moderator, Melvin O. Adams. Clerk, Newton Hayden.  
Selectmen, Simeon Merritt, Austin Whitney, Martin B.  
Lane.

Assessors, Walter R. Adams, Marshall Wetherbee, John  
L. Cummings.

1876. Moderator, Melvin O. Adams. Clerk, Newton Hayden.  
Selectmen, Simeon Merritt, Nathaniel Pierce, Benjamin E.  
Wetherbee.

Assessors, John L. Cummings, Marshall Wetherbee,  
Franklin Russell.

1877. Moderator, John H. Wilkins. Clerk, George F. Stevens.  
Selectmen, John L. Cummings, Nathaniel Pierce, Benja-  
min E. Wetherbee.

Assessors, the Selectmen.

1878. Moderator, John H. Wilkins. Clerk, George F. Stevens.  
Selectmen, John L. Cummings, Nathaniel Pierce, Benja-  
min E. Wetherbee.

Assessors, the Selectmen.

1879. Moderator, John H. Wilkins. Clerk, George F. Stevens.  
Selectmen, John L. Cummings, Nathaniel Pierce, Benja-  
min E. Wetherbee.

Assessors, the Selectmen.

1880. Moderator, John H. Wilkins. Clerk, George F. Stevens.



Selectmen, Simeon Merritt, Charles T. Litch, Orange Whitney.

Assessors, Walter R. Adams, Francis A. Whitney, Charles W. Whitney, 2d.

1881. Moderator, John H. Wilkins. Clerk, George F. Stevens.  
Selectmen, Simeon Merritt, Charles T. Litch, John M. Pratt.

Assessors, Walter R. Adams, Francis A. Whitney, Charles W. Whitney, 2d.

1882. Moderator, John H. Wilkins. Clerk, George F. Stevens.  
Selectmen, Simeon Merritt, Charles T. Litch, John M. Pratt.

Assessors, Francis A. Whitney, Charles F. Rockwood, Charles E. Woodward.

1883. Moderator, John H. Wilkins. Clerk, George F. Stevens.  
Selectmen, Charles T. Litch, Edward S. Flint, Charles H. Pratt.

Assessors, Benjamin E. Wetherbee, Daniels Ellis, Jr., Charles E. Woodward.

1884. Moderator, John H. Wilkins. Clerk, George F. Stevens.  
Selectmen, Charles T. Litch, Edward S. Flint, Charles H. Pratt.

Assessors, John L. Cummings, Walter R. Adams, Henry C. Newell.

1885. Moderator, John H. Wilkins. Clerk, George F. Stevens.  
Selectmen, Charles T. Litch, Charles H. Pratt, Edward S. Flint.

Assessors, John L. Cummings, Walter R. Adams, Henry C. Newell.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.

EARLY MEASURES TO SECURE PREACHING. — REV. ELISHA HARDING. — CALL AND ORDINATION OF REV. JONATHAN WINCHESTER. — A CHURCH EMBODIED. — THE COVENANT. — ORIGINAL MEMBERSHIP. — ADDITIONS. — THE FIRST DEACONS. — DEATH OF MR. WINCHESTER. — HIS CHARACTER. — CALL AND ORDINATION OF REV. JOHN CUSHING. — A LONG AND SUCCESSFUL MINISTRY. — AN ERA OF CONCORD. — DISCIPLINE WITHOUT ASPERITY. — HALF WAY COVENANT. — DEATH OF MR. CUSHING. — HIS CHARACTER. — CALL AND ORDINATION OF REV. GEORGE PERKINS. — INSTALLATION OF REV. GEORGE GOODYEAR. — REV. EDWIN JENNISON. — REV. ELNATHAN DAVIS. — REV. FREDERICK A. FISKE. — REV. ELBRIDGE G. LITTLE. — REV. THOMAS BOUTELLE. — REV. GEORGE D. FISHER. — REV. MOODY A. STEVENS. — REV. LEONARD S. PARKER. — REV. DANIEL E. ADAMS. — REV. JOSIAH D. CROSBY. — A VACANCY. — THE DEACONS.

TWENTY YEARS the meeting-house in Dorchester Canada invited occupancy before there was a settled minister. During this period there were occasional supplies but more frequently the settlers attended church in Lunenburg, where Moses Foster, James Coleman, Unity Brown, John Bates, Thomas Wheeler and others were in full or covenant relations. The church records of Lunenburg represent that many of the children born in Dorchester Canada previous to 1760 were baptized there. It is not known who preached or who assembled to hear the first sermon in the township and previous to the advent of Mr. Winchester the name of only one minister is found in the records. It is probable that the settlers sought and on week days sometimes enjoyed the friendly services of the clergy of Lunenburg, Townsend



and Westminster. Any other supply that was secured by the settlers without the intervention of the proprietors would escape mention in the records.

The humble plans of the settlement to secure preaching and the accumulating purpose reflected in the successive votes on the subject afford a renewed illustration of the fact that all our present privileges have sprung from unpretentious beginnings. Their first proposals were scarcely more than the suggestion of a prophecy of what has been accomplished. In 1750 the proprietors decide "not to prosecute the affair of calling a minister," but the following year they are found ready to order "that an Orthodox minister be applied to, to agree to preach the Gospel every four weeks if suitable weather." No money or committee was provided to carry the vote into effect. It was a timid proposition. Possibly they viewed their proceedings in this light, since in 1753, an earnest purpose is reflected in the vote "that Mr. Joseph Wheelock, Mr. Caleb Wilder and Mr. Benjamin Bigelow be a committee to see that a Gospel minister preach in said township until further orders of the propriety." None of the committee resided in the township and it is quite probable that they failed to meet the desires of the proprietors and particularly of those who had removed to the settlement. At the succeeding meeting the language becomes more emphatic. It assumes the dignity of a command. "Voted that eighteen pounds be put into the hands of Mr. Foster to be applied by him to secure preaching." Moses Foster had resided in the township several years. If he did not secure a minister it was not through a failure of personal interest or of his instructions; but to provide against every emergency there was a supplementary vote that Nathan Melvin, also a resident, coöperate with Mr. Foster. In 1755 an appropriation was made for current



expenses including preaching but no specific sum was set apart for this purpose. Between this date and the settlement of Mr. Winchester several payments were made on this account, but the records only preserve the name of Rev. Elisha Harding, who received four pounds "for preaching in Dorchester Canada." Mr. Harding was settled in Brookfield, Massachusetts, September 13, 1749, and dismissed May 8, 1755. In May, 1759, another appropriation of eighteen pounds was made and Captain Caleb Dana of Cambridge and John Bates and Elisha Coolidge of Dorchester Canada were selected "to provide preaching in said township." The early efforts of this committee introduced to the settlement Rev. Jonathan Winchester. The candidate was favorably received. A call was extended November 27, 1759, and he was ordained April 23, 1760. The story of the call and the ordination is briefly outlined in the records.

- 1759 Oct. 22. To appoint a committee to treat and agree with Mr. Jonathan Winchester, who has been preaching the Gospel there for some time past, concerning his settling in the work of the ministry there.
- 1759 Nov. 22. Voted that there should be twenty shillings lawful money Laid as a tax upon each Common Right yearly as a salary for Mr. Jonathan Winchester provided he shall settle in said township as a Gospel minister. One moiety thereof to be paid at the end of six months from the time he shall be agreed with to settle there and the other moiety in twelve months, annually, for the term of seven years or till such time as said township shall come into some other method of Raising said sum of money for his support.



Voted that there be twenty shillings Lawfull money Laid as a tax upon each Common Right as a Settlement for the above said Winchester if he shall settle as aforesaid, and to be paid to the treasurer by the time the said Winchester shall be ordained in said township.

Voted that Cap<sup>m</sup> Caleb Dana, Nathan Heywood, Cap<sup>m</sup> Caleb Wilder, M<sup>r</sup> John Moffat and Mr. Benj<sup>a</sup> Church be a Committee to treat and agree with Mr. Winchester concerning his settling in said township.

1760 Feb. 18. To hear the Report of the Committee appointed to treat and agree with M<sup>r</sup> Jonathan Winchester concerning his settling in the work of the ministry there.

To grant and raise money for the expense of his ordination in case of his acceptance of the invitation given him.

1760 March 25. Voted that the place for ordination of M<sup>r</sup> Winchester shall be in the township of Dorchester Canada.

Voted the time for ordaining M<sup>r</sup> Winchester shall be on wednesday the twenty-third day of April next.

Voted that we apply to five churches to assist in ordaining M<sup>r</sup> Winchester, that we send to the first Church in Cambridge, to the Church in Lunenburg, to the Church in Acton, to the Church in Lancaster and to the Church in Brookline to assist in said ordination.

Voted that each proprietor pay three shillings to defray the Cost and Charge of the ordination to be paid forthwith into the hands of the treasurer or other person or persons as the proprietors shall appoint to receive the same.



Voted that Mr Moses Foster, Cap<sup>tn</sup> Caleb Wilder and Cap<sup>tn</sup> Samuel Hunt be a Committee to provide for said ordination in as convenient a place as may be and that they or any of them be empowered to receive the money granted for that purpose.

Voted that Mr Winchester may fence in and improve the meeting House Lot being forty rods square where the meeting House now stands, provided he doth not incommode the County road nor obstruct or hinder the Burying of the dead, the burying place being in that lot.

The ordination, as appears in these votes, was arranged by an exterior organization but the minister was settled over the people. If the proprietors directed the proceedings their duties ended with them. The future comprehended only the new relations between the pastor and his flock. An agreement was made with Mr. Winchester in January. Probably the ordination was intentionally deferred until the close of the winter season.

Beyond the mention of the churches invited there is no record of the council. The records of the church in Brookline contain the following entry under date of "April 13, 1760.—Lord's Day. The pastor communicated to the church a letter from the committee of Dorchester Canada desiring the assistance of this church in the ordination of Mr. Jonathan Winchester, whereupon the church voted to comply with this request and chose Messrs. White, Aspinwall, Croft, Isaac and Joseph Winchester to represent them.

"Upon the request of Mr. Winchester the church dismissed and recommended him to the fellowship of the Church in Dorchester Canada."



The pastor of the Brookline church at this time was Rev. Joseph Jackson. Joseph Winchester was a brother of the candidate and Mr. Croft, probably, was a relative of Mrs. Winchester. Rev. John Swift, pastor of the church in Acton, was one of the proprietors of the township. The invitations included the venerable Rev. Dr. Nathaniel Appleton of Cambridge and Rev. Timothy Harrington of Lancaster. Caleb Dana was a member of the church in Cambridge and the Wilders of the church in Lancaster. The records of the churches last named are incomplete, and while they contain no reference to the ordination of Mr. Winchester it is probable that all the churches invited were represented on the occasion. The invitation to the church in Lunenburg was significant. It was the voice of the settlement. Many of the settlers had been accustomed to worship there and Rev. David Stearns was the only minister they had known for many years. Without his presence the council would have been incomplete. The original letter of Mr. Winchester accepting the invitation of the proprietors, written in plain round characters, is preserved.

TO MESSRS. CALEB DANA, CALEB WILDER, NATHAN HAYWOOD, JOHN MOFFATT and BENJAMIN CHURCH, a committee of the proprietors of the township called Dorchester Canada in the county of Worcester, to communicate to said proprietors :

*Gentlemen,*

Whereas you have given me, the subscriber, the most unworthy and undeserving, an invitation and call to settle in the important work of the Gospel Ministry at Dorchester Canada, I thank you for the respect and favour therein discovered to me.

After due consideration, asking advice, and especially seeking to the great Head of the Church for direction in so momentous and weighty an affair, esteeming your offers for my settlement



and support reasonable and generous and relying upon this (which will be of very great consequence with respect to my temporal interests and the comfortable subsistence of my family) viz.: that the right of land, which the first settled Gospel minister in the place is entitled to by the grant of the great and general court, be good and convenient for my settlement and that if the lots already appropriated to that purpose are not so, they be changed for lands more commodious, I have determined to accept your call and hereby do manifest my acceptance thereof. Asking your prayers and depending on Divine Grace for assistance that I may be enabled faithfully to discharge so important a trust and that my settling as a Gospel minister may be a means by the blessing of heaven of furthering the growth and prosperity of the place and promoting pure and undefiled religion in the hearts and lives of the inhabitants is the desire and prayer of, Gentlemen

Your devoted and most humble servant

JONATHAN WINCHESTER.

BROOKLINE, January 23, 1760.

The church was embodied the same day. Endorsing the prevailing creed of New England and desiring to enjoy the fellowship of the churches, it became necessary to adopt a covenant embracing the essential features of their faith. It would be expected that common forms of expression would be found in the covenants, but it further appears that the covenant approved by the church in Gardner in 1786 is substantially a copy of the declaration adopted at this time. The original covenant is still preserved and on the back are written the names of the thirteen male members, who were admitted at the embodiment of the church. The covenant and the names are as follows:

#### COVENANT.

We, whose names are hereunto subscribed, being as we apprehend called of God to enter into the Church State of the Gospel



for the free and constant enjoyment of God's Worship and Ordinances, do in the first place acknowledge our unworthiness to be so highly favored of God at the same time admiring and adoring the rich and free Grace of God that triumphs over so great unworthiness, with a humble dependence upon the Grace of God to enable us to do our duty, we would thankfully lay hold on his Covenant and choose the things that please Him.

We declare our serious and hearty belief of the Christian Religion as contained in the Sacred Scriptures and as usually embraced by the faithful in the Churches of New England, which is summarily exhibited (in the substance of it) in their confession of Faith; heartily resolving to conform our lives by the rule of Christ's holy Religion as long as we live in the world.

We give up ourselves to the Lord Jehovah who is the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit, we vouch him this day to be our God, our Father and our Savior and Leader and receive him as our portion forever.

We give up ourselves to the Blessed Jesus acknowledging His true Deity resolving to adhere to Him as the head of his people in the Covenant of Grace, and we do rely upon Him as our Prophet, Priest and King to bring us to eternal blessedness.

We acknowledge our everlasting and indisputable obligation to glorify God in all the Duties of a sober godly life and very particularly in the duties of a church state and a body of people associated for an Obedience to Him in all the ordinances of the Gospel and we hereupon depend on his Grace as sufficient for our faithful discharge of the Duties thus incumbent upon us.

We desire and also promise and engage with assistance to walk together as a church of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Faith and Order of the Gospel, so far as we do know the same, faithfully and conscientiously attending the Public Worship of God and the Sacraments of the New Testament. And that we will be observant of the rules and laws of Christ's Kingdom which regard the Discipline and Government of the Church as they have in general been administered among the churches before mentioned. And that we will attend all God's holy institutions in communion



with one another, watching over one another with a spirit of meekness, love and tenderness carefully avoiding all sinful stumbling blocks, strifes, contentions and that we will endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of Peace.

We do also present our Offspring with ourselves unto the Lord resolving with Divine Help to do our part in the Method of a Religious Education, that they may be the Lords, and that we will particularly be careful in our endeavor duly to sanctifie the Sabbath and to keep up Religion in our Families. And all this we do flying to the Blood of the everlasting Covenant for the pardon of all our sins, praying the glorious Head of the church who is the great Shepherd of the Sheep would prepare and strengthen us for every good work to do his will working in us that which will be pleasing in his sight, to whom be glory forever and ever.

JONATHAN WINCHESTER, *Pastor*

PHILIP VORBACK

CHRISTIAN WM. WHITEMAN

JOHN RICH

JACOB SCHOFFE

JOHN KIBLINGER

ELISHA COOLIDGE

UNITY BROWN

JOHN OBERLOCK

MOSES FOSTER

THOMAS WHEELER

JAMES COLEMAN

JOHN BATES

In the transcript of the covenant and signatures made by Mr. Cushing the name of Unity Brown is written Unight Brown probably from the fact that his Christian name was sometimes written Unite and incorrectly pronounced in two syllables. The wives of the original members united with the church at this time or soon after, but their names do not appear in the records. Mr. Winchester and his wife brought letters from the church in Brookline. Moses Foster, James



Coleman, Unity Brown and their wives were received on letters from the church in Lunenburg where they had maintained relations during their early residence in the settlement, and it is probable that some of the Germans presented letters from churches in their native land.

The additions to the church during the ministry of Mr. Winchester were Jeremiah Foster by profession, 1761; Samuel Fellows and wife, William Whitecomb and wife and Sarah Dickerson by letters from church in Harvard and Stephen Ames and wife by profession, 1762; Tristram Cheney and wife and Hannah Joyner by letter from church in Sudbury, Ebenezer Conant and wife from church in Concord, 1763; John Martin and wife, Samuel Fellows, Jr., and wife and Ebenezer Hemenway by profession, 1764; Jeremiah Foster, Jr., and Abraham Smith and wife by profession, 1765; Deliverance Davis and wife and Mary Whitman, wife of John Whitman, by profession, 1766; Daniel Merrill and wife, Sarah Foster, wife of Jeremiah Foster, Jr., and Job Coleman and wife, 1767. The whole number is forty-two, to which should be added the names of the females who were received at the organization of the church. The first deacons were Moses Foster and Samuel Fellows but a record of their election is not found. Beyond this outline of the results of his ministry, little is known of the labors and characteristics of Mr. Winchester. That he secured the love and respect of his people and was regarded as a most worthy and upright man is reflected in the measure of their sorrow at his death. The proprietors also manifested their esteem in a vote to make him a gratuity in addition to his stated salary. "Voted that the proprietors will grant Rev. Mr. Winchester £18 as a consideration of the extraordinary expense, he has been put to for two years past, on account of the high price of provisions." This action



occurred January 26, 1763, and is suggestive of the hardships and trials attending both the pastor and his people in a new settlement.

The death of Mr. Winchester, which occurred on Wednesday, November 26, 1767, was a serious loss to the young parish. At once they were bereft of a faithful pastor, a judicious counsellor and a sincere friend. Their established relations, their mutual plans, their brightest hopes of the future were ended by the sad event. That the people realized their loss and gave unmistakable expression of the deepest sorrow is announced in the records and confirmed by many traditions. The widow continued to reside in this town where she died July 27, 1794, and the name has never faded from the registers of the town.

Rev. Jonathan Winchester, son of Henry and Frances Winchester of Brookline, was born April 21, 1717. He was graduated at Harvard University 1737, and for several years was a school teacher in Brookline. He married May 5, 1748, Sarah Crofts, an educated and talented lady, of Brookline, where six of their ten children were born. If Mr. Winchester preached anywhere previous to his removal to this town the fact has not appeared. When he began preaching here he had not been ordained and consequently this was his first settlement in the ministry. If little has been found concerning the life and characteristics of Mr. Winchester, there is abundant evidence that he was a man of singular purity of character, a kind neighbor and an earnest and effective preacher. That he was respected and greatly beloved by his people is clearly reflected in the records, and that he was a man of earnest, steadfast purposes, of generous and friendly impulses, restrained by a firm adherence to the commands of duty, is supported by many traditions.



It is the testimony of Dr. Cushing that he lived in peace and was respected and beloved and when he died was much lamented. And his parish soon after his death engraved upon the tablet that marks his grave their appreciation of the minister whom they had loved.

THE GENTLEMAN, THE SCHOLAR AND THE CHRISTIAN WERE IN  
HIM CONSPICUOUS. AS A PREACHER, HE WAS ACCEPTABLE;  
AS A HUSBAND, TENDER; AS A PARENT, AFFECTIONATE;  
AS A NEIGHBOR, KIND; AS A FRIEND, SINCERE;  
FOR CANDOR, MEEKNESS, PATIENCE AND  
MODESTY REMARKABLE.

*Integer vitor, scelerisque purus.*

A newspaper of the time, *The Boston Post Boy and Advertiser*, in the issue of December 28, 1767, announces the death of Mr. Winchester in these terms: "The latter end of November died at Ashburnham, long known by the name of Dorchester Canada, the Rev. Mr. Jonathan Winchester, Minister of the church in that town. A sensible, worthy man."

After the death of Mr. Winchester, the church "chose Deacon Moses Foster moderator while destitute of a pastor." "June 16, 1768, the church met and made choice of John Cushing for the minister with a full vote and chose Deacons Foster and Fellows and Brother Cheney as a committee to acquaint him of it." In this action of the church the town on the fourth of July unanimously concurred. "September 21, 1768, the church met and voted that the ordination of the pastor elect, John Cushing, should be on the second day of November following, and voted to send to seven churches." "Chose Deacon Fellows, Elisha Coolidge and Tristram Cheney to sign the letters missive." To this decision of the church the town promptly assented and made ample arrangements for the occasion.



The council, if all the invitations were accepted, was composed of Rev. Joseph Sumner of Shrewsbury, the successor of the father of Mr. Cushing; Rev. Ebenezer Morse, pastor of the North Parish, now Boylston; Rev. Ebenezer Parkman of Westboro', the father of the future wife of Mr. Cushing; Rev. Jacob Cushing of Waltham, a brother of the candidate; Rev. Asaph Rice of Westminster; Rev. Stephen Farrar of New Ipswich, at whose ordination Mr. Winchester had assisted and Rev. John Payson of Fitchburg.

In full sympathy with this sombre day in autumn and with hearts heavy with sorrow for their first minister, whom they had loved, the church and parish look to his successor with hope and courage. Many trivial affairs have made more display on the pages of the records but in its pervading and salutary influences in directing and moulding the sentiment of another generation, in the full measure of its results, the ordination of Mr. Cushing was a most memorable event in the annals of Ashburnham. The minister, in the robust strength and courage of early manhood, assumes the labors and burdens of a lifetime; while the people, entering an era of concord, willingly comply with the mild yet unyielding influences of his faithful ministrations.

The years of a successful ministry crowned with the rewards of peace and harmony are only the links in a continuous chain of similar events. They are so alike in outline, so connected in record, they cannot be regarded separately. The labor of Mr. Cushing began with his ordination and ended with his death. It admits of no divisions. For fifty-five and one-half years the course of his labor, like the flow of a river, was uninterrupted and onward. To measure the flood emptied into the sea we must notice the duration as well as the volume of the



current. Before his allotted work was scarce begun those aged at the time of his ordination had faded away; the middle-aged and those in the strength of early manhood grew old and also died; while yet with vigor unabated he ministered to their children and beneath his sight the youth he first beheld passed the stages of life and sunk beneath the weight of years. Without a change of scene his charge and congregation were many times renewed.

The registers of the church during his ministry are a continued record of wisdom in administration and freedom from any serious contention. At the beginning the town was united in religious opinions and in harmony with the creed of the church. At a later period the pastor and the church found frequent employment in dealing with an increasing number of dissenters. First, a few announcing a change of opinion on the doctrine of baptism desired to withdraw and unite with those of kindred faith, and early within the present century a larger number withdrew and united with the Methodists. Compared with the prevailing usage and practice of the times a liberal policy was pursued and a commendable measure of forbearance and toleration was exercised. In a review of the position of the church in these proceedings Mr. Cushing says,—"There has generally been manifested a disposition that each should enjoy liberty of conscience. I have uniformly endeavored to exercise charity towards dissenters and to avoid asperity and censoriousness. And the reflection that I have thus endeavored affords satisfaction. In exercising the discipline of Christ's kingdom I have aimed to avoid severity. I have often thought of an observation of the bishop of St. Asaph as worthy of regard: 'The art of government consists in not governing too much.'"

The great embarrassment of the church rested in the fact that each measure of discipline on questions of faith was



answered by a request for a letter of dismissal and recommendation. This they could not grant without officially recognizing a church of another denomination and that, for many years, they would not do. The church also maintained that a withdrawal without leave was amenable to discipline and that a dismissal could not be granted until the offending persons had given satisfaction to the church. A candid review of these proceedings must lead to the conclusion that the church in fact was laid under the sternest discipline and wisely profited by it. With a laudable degree of justice and in advance of the practice of the churches in this vicinity the church in Ashburnham began to grant dismissals when requested and to give a general certificate of good moral character. This procedure at once freed the church from a perpetual season of discipline and left the dissenters, armed with a commendation "to whom it may concern," at full liberty to follow the leadings of duty or inclination.

In 1778, the following persons were dismissed upon their declaration that they had changed their sentiments in respect to Infant Baptism, the manner of supporting the Gospel, and of admitting church members: Elisha Coolidge, Ebenezer Conant, Ebenezer Conant, Jr., and wife, Nathan Putnam and wife, Nathan Bigelow and wife, Jacob Willard and wife, Jacob Constantine and wife, John Martin and wife, and John Bigelow. Upon their dismissal they were favored with the following letter:

Whereas Elisha Coolidge and others, members of this church, have withdrawn themselves from this church and plead their changing their religious sentiments with respect to Infant Baptism, etc., as the reason, and that they can't in conscience hold communion with us as heretofore and desiring a dismission from their relations to this church, *These* are to signify that we would



not forcibly detain them or hold them against their consent, but do dismiss them from their relations to us and certify withal that before they withdrew from communion with us they were free from scandal and while they appeared before the church, to give their reasons for absenting, they conducted in a brotherly and christian manner.

While the persons who withdrew at this time were styled Baptists on account of a feature of their creed they further contended that it was sinful and unscriptural to maintain a salaried clergy, or in their own words, "we are against those that preach for hire or those that ask pay for kindling a fire on God's altar." The case of Mary Cheney who joined the Baptists without requesting a dismissal was attended with more difficulty :

*The Church of Christ in Ashburnham to Mary Cheney :*

At a meeting of the church regularly held, your conduct in leaving this church without leave or notice given was taken in consideration and, after maturely weighing the matter, judged that it was a breach of covenant and that you ought to be admonished for your disorderly conduct. When you was admitted among us, you solemnly promised to walk in communion with us as far as you knew your duty, and we promised to watch over you and are now endeavoring to perform our engagement by sending you this letter of admonition. When you was dissatisfied with us and could not in conscience have communion with us, why could you not have manifested your mind? We do not want to debar any from enjoying liberty of conscience, but how can the purity and order of the church possibly be kept up, if members, contrary to solemn engagements, break away from one church to another without the least notice given? Your change of opinions can't justify your conduct, for God is a God of order and not of confusion.

We therefore admonish you for breach of covenant and earnestly entreat you to consider seriously of what you have done and of the bad and dangerous consequences of such disorderly behavior and



to give the church you have justly offended christian satisfaction without which we cannot at any time admit you to any privilege among us if you should desire it. And we judge also that the church to which you have joined are disorderly and ought to be admonished. We pray the great Shepherd would lead and guide you by his spirit, make you fully sensible of your evil conduct and dispose you to make that satisfaction which we must suppose your conscience upon mature deliberation will readily dictate.

We subscribe ourselves your offended brethren, yet ready to be reconciled upon reasonable and christian terms.

The defection of a few from the church to the Methodists occurred at a later period and under the warmth of a more charitable and tolerant spirit. The following letter truthfully reflects the pacific policy which pervades the records at this period.

April 4, 1796. — Whereas our brother Stephen Randall, Jr., has requested that he may be dismissed from this to the Episcopal Methodist Church because he finds he is better edified than to continue with us and is not fully satisfied with the custom of disciplining members, we would say, we wish not to deprive him of any good which he thinks he may gain for his soul, we are free and willing that every one should have liberty of conscience. Also a letter of dismission would introduce him into the Methodist Church, from the principle of christian charity and communion we should readily grant it, certifying that his moral character is good. We desire and pray that he may adorn the doctrine of Jesus Christ with those of his denomination, though we would not be understood as fully approving all their doctrines and discipline.

In other cases of discipline, with limited knowledge of the facts and surroundings, it would be folly to inquire if the church had been severe or if the offenders had sinned. Only one case evincing the breadth and tenderness of brotherhood will be cited. This report of a committee delegated to visit



one of the most prominent citizens of the town is in the language of Mr. Cushing who was one of the committee and is dated January 1, 1818.

We waited upon him soon after our appointment and after saying everything we could on the one hand to dissuade him from the excessive use of spirit, and on the other to encourage him to a reformation, at length he told us that he had come to a resolution to refrain entirely for one month. At the end of which we might visit him again and if we found he had broken over the resolution we might do with him as we thought best. Accordingly at the end of the month we all visited him again and he declared he had not taken a drop of spirit, and upon being asked what his purpose was for the future he told that it was his determination to persevere, so that we were relieved from the disagreeable work of leaving the letter of admonition with him, and we rejoiced together at the pleasing and happy prospect of a reformation. He seemed to have uncomfortable apprehensions that he should not be able to remove the offence he had given the church. But we answered him that the offence would cease immediately upon his reformation, that the church would rejoice, that his family and connections would rejoice, yea and the angels in Heaven would rejoice.

It is within the memory of many of the aged among us, that Mr. Cushing maintained an advanced position on the question of temperance and that in the pulpit, more frequently than many of his contemporaries, he boldly preached the error and evils of intemperance. If his views on this subject were presented with a characteristic rigor of opinion, they were attended in his daily walk among his people with that spirit of forgiveness and brotherly love and tenderness which pervades the report we have cited.

The church in Ashburnham was among the first to abandon the custom of administering the rites of baptism to the children of parents who were not members of the church.



This custom of very early origin prevailed in many of the New England churches until a comparatively recent period. The parents who thus desired to present their offspring for baptism were required to "own the covenant," or in other words, to publicly express a general belief in the creed of the church. They were not required to profess, and it is reasonably certain they did not always possess, the moral qualification of membership and they were only expected to express an intellectual assent to the general truths of the church covenant. The persons who had only owned the covenant were not admitted to communion nor were they amenable to church discipline, but being admitted to the privilege of presenting their children for baptism on an equality with those in full communion they were frequently styled "half way members." This practice continued throughout the ministry of Mr. Winchester, but it never fully met the approval of Mr. Cushing. With an habitual conservatism in regard to measures, and mindful of the vigilant tendency of his people to oppose any abridgment of their privileges or accepted customs, he presented the following proposition which was adopted without evidence of opposition :

We the church of Christ in Ashburnham, being desirous of promoting practical religion in this place, taking into consideration the general practice in the churches of persons owning the covenant, and having reason to fear that such are left to run too much at large without being watched over and not seeing the consistency of their solemnly owning the covenant and then not paying regard thereto as is the case too much with respect to some it appearing too evident that the main design of some is for the sake of enjoying the ordinance of baptism only : We have come into the following vote :

That we will not for the future admit any to the privilege of baptism except members in full. And that we might not be



thought too severe — if there should be any (which we hope will not be the case), who are so full of doubt and fear, that they dare not approach to the table, but yet are desirous of enjoying the privilege of baptism and putting themselves under the care and watch of the church, we shall not insist upon their participation under such a situation of their mind, nor proceed to censure them if they do not immediately partake of the ordinance.

Inasmuch as there are several that are in covenant that are not members in full, this vote is not to be considered as cutting them off from a privilege granted to them heretofore. However we will consider them as under the inspection of the church, and we engage that we will watch over them as though they were members in full.

This action occurred April 7, 1773. There were some precedents for it at this date, but it was twenty or more years in advance of very many churches situated nearer the schools of theology and the centres of influence.

Notwithstanding the disintegrating influences which were felt at times not only in this town but throughout New England, the membership of the church slowly increased in numbers throughout the ministry of Mr. Cushing. The loss occasioned by death, by removals from the town and by a transfer of relations was more than compensated by an increase in population and the fruit of several seasons of unusual religious interest. The registers of the church in the handwriting of Mr. Cushing represent that, at the time of his death, there were about one hundred and thirty resident members. In one small volume the statistics of more than fifty years are carefully entered. The summary includes the names of three hundred and thirty-one persons admitted to the fellowship of the church; the baptism of nine hundred and sixty-three children and twenty-four adults and the record of three hundred and twelve marriages.



Rev. John Cushing, D. D., was born in Shrewsbury, Massachusetts, August 22, 1744. A descendant of the Cushing family of Hingham he inherited the strong and vigorous traits of character which have distinguished many generations. He was a son of Rev. Job and Mary (Prentice) Cushing. His father was the first minister of Shrewsbury where he died August 6, 1760. His mother was the daughter of Rev. John and Mary (Gardner) Prentice of Lancaster and an honored name in the annals of that town. She died at the age of ninety years May 24, 1798.

Mr. Cushing entered Harvard University where he maintained an honorable standing and was graduated 1764, exactly fifty years after his father had received a diploma from the same institution. At the age of twenty-four years he was ordained and settled over the church in this town, November 2, 1768, and died April 27, 1823. From his *alma mater* he received the degree of Doctor of Divinity 1822.

The most fitting tribute to the memory of Mr. Cushing is found in his works. For many years he was the only minister in the town. He stood in the midst of an increasing parish scattered over a large township, yet his influence pervaded every portion of it. He was faithful in every service. Two sermons were regularly prepared for the Sabbath, frequent discourses were written for week-day lectures and his ministrations to the sick and the bereaved were prompt and unailing. He was constant in his attendance upon the schools and in all social relations with his parish. At every fireside the serenity of his countenance, the wisdom of his speech and the purity of his life and example were continually deepening the impression and enforcing the influences of his public ministrations. He gladly welcomed all the moral and benevolent enterprises



of his time. The cause of temperance and the early missionary organizations received from him a warm and efficient support.

In stature, Mr. Cushing was tall and portly; in bearing dignified and erect. He moved with precision and with the incisive mark of strength and vigor. As the infirmity of age grew upon him, his step was slower but never faltering; his form became slightly bowed but lost none of its original dignity and commanding presence. His mild blue eye and the serenity of his countenance were undimmed even when his whitened and flowing locks were counting the increasing furrows of age in his face.

As a preacher he adhered to the fundamental doctrines of his creed and supported them with frequent quotation from the Scriptures. The plan of his discourse was lucid and his methods of reasoning direct and logical. If he was tenacious in the use of set terms and forms of speech he invariably applied them with aptness and precision. He did not rely on the abundance of words or the exhibition of emotion, but upon the weight and sequence of the central truths which formed the theme of his discourse. His voice was clear, strong and pleasing. He read his sermons closely and without gesture. In delivery he was moderate, earnest and impressive. At home and abroad he was justly regarded as an able, instructive preacher. The ability of Mr. Cushing in an intellectual sense was conspicuous. Measured by men of acknowledged power and ability he was not deficient. He held a foremost rank among illustrious compeers in his profession and was an equal in mind and character of Reverends Payson of Rindge, Farrar and Hall of New Ipswich, Waters of Ashby, Rice of Westminster and Pillsbury of Winchendon.



As a counsellor he was prudent and judicial. Possessing a thorough knowledge of ecclesiastical law and skilled in the usages of the church, his advice was frequently sought in the settlement of contention in other churches. In such service his counsels were invaluable. If his associates were exacting and harsh in their conclusions, his judgments were always tempered with mercy and his decisions fragrant with forgiveness and reconciliation. In the midst of every form of contention, his goal was peace and seldom was he moved from his accustomed paths by the passions of contending men. In ecclesiastical councils of a more pacific character his services were frequently solicited and cheerfully rendered and for many years a council was seldom convened in a circle of many miles to which he was not invited.

In his daily life Mr. Cushing was laborious. His discourses were carefully written, his parochial visits were regularly made and the schools were familiar with his presence. With these uninterrupted ministrations and the care of his farm he found time in some way for reading and music. He was regarded by his associates in the ministry as a man of liberal knowledge and varied acquirements.

He was preëminently a minister of the olden time. His parish was his field of labor and no one was neglected. His charge was his constant thought and duty, and while he watched for the fruit of his labor, he toiled on with unflinching hope and courage. Even in the decline of life and under the weight of nearly eighty years his service was acceptable and his parish united in their love and respect for their venerable teacher. It seems that their affection for him increased as he paled and grew feeble in their service. And when death came and stilled the pulsations of his warm and generous heart, his people paid a fitting tribute in the lines of sorrow engraved on every countenance. From that



hour the voice of tradition began to assert that his genius was solid; his understanding clear; his judgment strong; his memory faithful; his emotions cool and restrained yet his sympathies tender and his affections warm; that his resolution and perseverance were unusual, that he was faithful to every trust and that his heart was so honest, his friendship so sincere and his tongue under such control, that his smile was a benediction and his speech a sermon.

Mr. Cushing married September 28, 1769, Sarah Parkman, daughter of Rev. Ebenezer and Hannah (Breck) Parkman of Westboro, who surviving her husband died in this town March 12, 1825. The record of the family is continued in the genealogical registers.

After these many years the church and the parish were without a minister. There were several families in town that had removed hither soon after the settlement of Mr. Cushing, but very few were living who witnessed his ordination. The only grown persons living in this town in 1768 who remained here and survived Mr. Cushing were Enos Jones, Rebecca (Foster) Ward, widow of Caleb Ward, Judith (Foster) Brooks, widow of Dr. Peter Brooks.

The following June the town chose William J. Lawrence, Thomas Hobart, Reuben Townsend, Jr., Joseph Jewett and Benjamin Barrett to supply the pulpit. At a meeting early in October the committee reported that "they had hired Mr. George Perkins to preach four Sabbaths." Three weeks later the town voted to hear Mr. Perkins four additional Sabbaths and on the first day of December instructed the committee to employ Mr. Perkins until further orders from the town. December 24, eight months after the death of Mr. Cushing, the church extended a unanimous call, in which the town concurred in a vote of sixty-eight to seventeen. The town instructed the committee formerly chosen



to notify the candidate and the church joined Deacon Hunt, Dr. Lowe and Doddridge Cushing. The letter of acceptance is subjoined :

ASHBURNHAM, Jany. 24, 1824.

To the Congregational Church and Society in Ashburnham :

*Christian Brethren and Friends —*

Having been presented by your committee with the votes of this church and congregation giving me a call to settle with you as your Gospel minister and having, as I trust, attentively and prayerfully sought to know my duty in a case of such vast importance in its consequences, both to you and to myself, I have come to a determination to accept of the invitation contained in your votes, subject to the conditions specified therein. I am also ready to unite with the church and society in such measures as may be necessary to carry your votes and this answer into effect. As there may be occasions which will render it necessary for me to leave this place for a longer period than one week at a time, I think it reasonable to claim the privilege of being absent two Sabbaths in each year, without abatement of compensation, — this being the least number usually granted. The church and society will also expect me to make such exchanges as are customary among neighboring ministers.

Feeling, as I do, my unworthiness of so important a trust and my utter insufficiency in my own strength, to lead a life of usefulness amongst you, I cannot close without making the further request that I may at all times have your fervent prayers to God that He would make me a zealous, faithful and successful minister of the New Testament to the souls of this people.

GEORGE PERKINS.

Mr. Perkins was ordained February 25, 1824. The council comprised the Reverends Bascom and Putnam of Ashby, Putnam of Fitchburg, Mann of Westminster, Wellington of Templeton, Estabrook of Athol, Sabin of Fitzwilliam and Deacon George Coffin of Winchendon.



The ministry of Mr. Perkins was successful and unusually acceptable to the church and congregation. Entering the ministry without pursuing a prescribed course of study he had not acquired the conventional manners of the schools, yet in him were combined dignity with affability and unusual plainness of speech with equal kindness. In the pulpit he was often colloquial, sometimes eloquent and always instructive. A few lines from a letter written by Sarah Jewett in December, 1823, will be accepted as authority in regard to his characteristics. "Mr. Perkins is our candidate. I am certain you will like him much, as you like unassuming manners. He is an uncommonly interesting man. His manner in the pulpit is easy and natural; his composition chaste; and his remarks original, and we seldom witness such urbanity of manner." It is the united testimony of all who remember him that he was a devoted minister and a kind, sympathizing friend. By his ready sympathy and his exemplary walk and conversation he secured the affections and respect of his people. In his public ministrations he was discreet and faithful. At a season of controversial discussion, which was rending many churches, his flock was united and by avoiding doctrinal preaching he persuaded his people to drown dissension in forgetfulness. The ministry of Mr. Perkins in this place was interrupted by the feebleness of the aged parents of his wife who sought his care and assistance. Obtaining a dismissal from his charge he returned to Connecticut.

A mutual council was convened July 3, 1832, and after formally assenting to the desire of Mr. Perkins to be released from his charge the record proceeds:

The council are happy to state that in the dissolution of the pastoral relations of the Rev. George Perkins to this church and people the most mutual good feeling has prevailed and we wish to



state explicitly that the reasons assigned for a dissolution of this relation are such as do not show any dissatisfaction of the church and people towards their pastor nor any dissatisfaction on his part towards them.

Rev. George Perkins, son of Dr. Elisha and Sarah (Douglas) Perkins, was born in Plainfield, Connecticut, October 19, 1783. He pursued a preparatory course of study at the Academy in his native town and was graduated at Yale College 1803. After reading law in the office of Hon. Charles Marsh of Woodstock, Vermont, he soon became a prominent lawyer in Norwich, Connecticut. In the continued practice of his profession he earned an excellent reputation as a safe and prudent counsellor and an able advocate. Such was his integrity and conscientious adherence to his idea of right, he was familiarly styled by his brethren in the profession and often by the public as "Honest George." In 1821, and soon after the death of his first wife, closing his office in Norwich and with little remark concerning his intentions, he sought the home of his brother, Rev. J. Douglas Perkins, in Coatesville, Pennsylvania, and under his tuition he pursued the study of theology a year or more. Entering the ministry at the age of forty years and after preaching a few Sabbaths in Ashby, his first continued pastoral labor was in this town. After his dismissal from this church he was installed in 1832 over the church in Jewett City, Connecticut, where he remained six years.

Of his ministry in that place, Rev. Thomas L. Shipman, his successor, has written, "He preached eloquently seven days in the week by the power of a holy life." Later he was occupied some time in the settlement of the estate of Dr. John Turner, the father of his wife, and residing in



Norwich he supplied in the vicinity from time to time until death came to abide with him September 15, 1852.

Mr. Perkins, after a brief interval, was succeeded by Rev. George Goodyear. He was the last minister who preached in the meeting-house on the hill and the first who ministered in the new house in the village. He was installed October 10, 1832, and dismissed at his request November 16, 1841. This was a pastorate of pleasant and enduring memories and a season of temporal and spiritual prosperity. The new meeting-house was built soon after the labors of Mr. Goodyear began. The congregation was large and many names were enrolled on the registers of the church; one hundred and ten members being received in a single year, of whom seventy-seven were admitted the first Sabbath in July, 1834. During this memorable season the pastor was assisted by Horatio Foot, the evangelist. Many who read his name will recall his earnest words and impassioned manner as they wonder if his appeal to the emotions was as enduring as the address of abler men to the intellect.

In the discharge of ministerial duty, Mr. Goodyear was faithful and in all his relations with his fellow-men he was kind and sympathizing. No one approached him as a friend without feeling an answering kindness or in sorrow without being comforted. His sermons were the expression of an earnest purpose and a sincere desire to improve his hearers, and when he came down from the pulpit mingling with his people his religion, his gentleness, his affability did not forsake him. In an eminent degree he secured the love of his people and the respect of the community.

Rev. I. Sumner Lincoln, now living at an advanced age in Wilton, New Hampshire, has paid an appreciative tribute to his friend and neighbor.



My acquaintance with Mr. Goodyear commenced in 1821 when he entered Yale College, of which I became a member in 1818. After completing his academical and theological studies at Yale, and while preaching in pursuit of a place of settlement, he visited my settled home in Gardner and preached for me on Sunday a good sermon. Ashburnham was then destitute of a pastor. On Monday morning I carried him there and introduced and recommended him to the parish committee. From that time he became their minister and my good neighbor for nine years. During that time he made full proof of his gospel ministry both as a good preacher and pastor. He sustained a good reputation as a man and a minister and made many most worthy friends. After he left that place and I left Gardner we were widely separated for some years, but for the last fifteen years we have been happy neighbors again, he in Temple and myself in Wilton, where our friendly intercourse was renewed and continued to the time of his recent departure to his celestial home. Full of Christian faith, virtue and hope he has passed into the personal presence of his Lord and Savior.

Rev. George Goodyear, son of Simeon and Hannah (Beadsly) Goodyear, was born in Hamden, Connecticut, December 9, 1801. The Goodyears of Connecticut have been distinguished in many walks of life. Charles Goodyear, the patentee and manufacturer of rubber wares, was a first cousin of the fourth minister of Ashburnham. Mr. Goodyear prepared for college under the tuition of Rev. Edward Hooker, D. D., and at Bacon Academy in Colchester. He was graduated at Yale College 1824 and at the Theological Seminary in New Haven 1827. Ordained without charge July 22, 1828. Previous to his installation in this town he preached as stated supply at Gaines, New York, and at East Windsor, Connecticut. Upon his removal from this town after supplying nearly two years at Renerville, New York, he was installed over churches in Truro, 1846-9,



South Royalston, 1849-54 and Temple, New Hampshire, 1854-65. Mr. Goodyear was a member of the New Hampshire Legislature 1865 and 1866. His last dismissal was at his earnest desire and on account of his failing health. He died in Temple, where he had continued to reside, November 18, 1884.

After hearing two or more candidates, the church and parish united in a decision to hire Rev. Edwin Jennison for two years. This action was soon modified. A call was accepted and Mr. Jennison was installed May 12, 1842, or within six months after the dismissal of Mr. Goodyear. In the first year of this pastorate the church in North Ashburnham was organized to which twenty-five members of the church transferred their relations. Mr. Jennison entered upon his labors under favorable auspices. He was an acceptable preacher and was justly regarded as an earnest, devoted minister. His health soon failed, but with fading strength he continued his labor until the close of the fourth year. The relation was dissolved May 12, 1846, and from the record of the proceedings it appears that "The council regard Mr. Jennison with high esteem and confidence as a worthy Christian brother, an able and faithful preacher of the gospel and an affectionate pastor."

Rev. Edwin Jennison, a son of Major William and Phœbe (Field) Jennison, was born in Walpole, New Hampshire, August 26, 1805. He was graduated at Dartmouth College 1827, and at Andover Theological Seminary 1830. Previous to his labors in this town Mr. Jennison had been settled over churches in Walpole, his native town, 1831-5, Mont Vernon, New Hampshire, 1836-41. Subsequently he was installed at Hopkinton, New Hampshire, January 6, 1847, and dismissed September 5, 1849. In each instance the relation was dissolved on account of his feeble health. For twenty-



five years he has been incapacitated from labor and has resided in Winchester, New Hampshire, and of late in Conway, Massachusetts.

The dismissal of Mr. Jennison had been anticipated. His failing health had prepared his charge for the event and a successor was soon chosen. To Rev. Elnathan Davis a call was extended by the church May 25, which was ratified by the parish June 27, 1846. For some reason, not now apparent, the installation was deferred and in the mean time Mr. Davis continued to preach with unqualified acceptance. A council being convened early in September exception was taken to the views of the candidate on the doctrinal question of infant baptism. The solemnities were postponed. The council was recalled September 16, 1846, and recognizing the merit and ability of the candidate, and finding the church and society tenacious in their increasing desire to have the pastor of their choice settled over them, the installation was consummated. The minutes of the council are evidence that all the proceedings were conducted in a friendly spirit and that the only embarrassment was found in a difference of opinion on a single question of doctrine.

Mr. Davis was a man of positive ideas and enduring convictions. He was an able preacher and an active pastor. His labor was incessant, knowing every member of his flock he kindly and faithfully ministered to them. The church and the parish were united, the social meetings were fully attended and the influences of this pastorate have been permanent and salutary. In the dawn of many golden promises of a long and happy ministry, Mr. Davis was invited to attend the World's Peace Congress held in Paris in 1849. Knowing that this overture, if not refused, would invite a continued connection with the American Peace Society and consequently lead to a dissolution of his relations to the



church and people of Ashburnham, he accepted the proffered mission with great reluctance. Soon after his return from Europe Mr. Davis became the secretary of the Peace Society and tendered his resignation as pastor of this church. He was formally dismissed May 21, 1851.

Rev. Elnathan Davis, son of Ethan and Sarah (Hubbard) Davis, was born in Holden, August 19, 1807. Graduating at Williams College 1831, East Windsor (Connecticut) Theological Seminary 1836, he was ordained as an evangelist at Holden in November following. He labored in the cause of Home Missions several years in Indiana and Michigan. Returning to the East in 1845 he was settled in Ashburnham the following year. Later he was pastor of the Trinitarian church in Fitchburg fourteen years. In 1869 he was elected to the Legislature from the Fitchburg district and immediately after this service he removed to Auburn and preached there until 1879 and there resided until his death, April 9, 1881.

The seventh pastor was Rev. Frederick A. Fiske who was installed December 30, 1851. This was a brief pastorate. Mr. Fiske came at a season of inactivity in the church and indifference in the parish. If he did not mingle with the people with the brotherly and ready sympathy that attended the walk of Mr. Davis and Mr. Goodyear, he set before them the example of a well ordered life and conversation. In the pulpit he was unemotional but instructive; earnest but never eloquent; his sermons were carefully written but delivered with little animation. At the close of two years of labor he made a request for an increase of salary. It came at an inopportune moment. The failure to accede to the request was chargeable more to the temporary condition of the parish than to the general impulses of the people. With fraternal sentiment on other points the relation was dissolved April 17, 1854.



Rev. Frederick Augustus Fiske, the son of the Rev. Elisha and Margaret (Shepard) Fiske, was born in Wrentham, Massachusetts, April 15, 1816, and was prepared for college at Day's Academy in his native town. After his graduation, he at once engaged in teaching; first as assistant in Washington Institute, New York city, then in Norwalk, Connecticut, next as principal of Monson Academy (1833-4), later in Fall River, and finally as principal of the High School in Clinton. After taking the full course of three years at Yale Theological Seminary (from 1847 to 1850), he entered upon the work of the ministry, being ordained pastor of this church. For about three years from November 16, 1854, he was pastor of the Congregational church in East Marshfield, Massachusetts; for the next eight years, principal of a boarding school in Newton; from 1865 to 1868, Superintendent of Education for North Carolina, under the Freedmen's Bureau; and from January 26, 1869, to November 28 of the same year, pastor of the Congregational church in Raynham. The remaining years of his life were spent in the service of the Protestant Episcopal church, his ordination as a deacon occurring June 25, 1870, and as a priest, November 5, 1870. From July, 1870, to May, 1873, he was rector of Trinity church, Van Deusenville; from May, 1873, to September, 1876, rector of St. Paul's church, Brookfield, Connecticut; from September, 1876, till his death, rector of Grace church, North Attleborough. He died December 15, 1878.

Mr. Fiske was succeeded by Rev. E. G. Little, who was installed August 22, 1855. This was a memorable pastorate. In the autumn of the first year Mr. Day, an evangelist, was joined with the pastor in a series of meetings which were fully attended. The visible fruit of their labor is found in the record of forty-two admissions to the church before the



close of the year. Mr. Little was a diligent pastor. His sermons were wrought with care, logical in arrangement, sometimes glowing with the warmth of an ardent nature and always teaching the fundamental doctrines of his faith. His brief ministry in this town was terminated at his request May 13, 1857.

Elbridge Gerry Little was born in Hampstead, New Hampshire, November 11, 1817. He was a son of Joseph and Rebecca (Webster) Little. At an early age he commenced teaching. Mainly meeting the expenses of a liberal education by his own efforts, he fitted for college under the instruction of Prof. Benjamin Greenleaf of Bradford and entered the college of Nassau Hall at Princeton, New Jersey, in sophomore year, graduating in the class of 1845. He pursued a full course of study at Princeton Theological Seminary and was licensed to preach in April, 1848. His first charge was at Manayunk, Pennsylvania, a suburb of Philadelphia. Returning to New England in 1850, he was installed over the church in Merrimack, New Hampshire, in September of that year. After his dismissal from this church and after preaching a year or more in Middleborough he was installed over the church in that place April 13, 1859, and dismissed September 15, 1867. Mr. Little then removed to Wellesley where he was mainly engaged in secular and literary pursuits until his death which occurred December 29, 1869.

Succeeding Mr. Little, Rev. Thomas Boutelle supplied the pulpit nearly six years, from the spring of 1857 to January, 1863. His health was not firm and afforded so little assurance of continued service that a call was not extended. The friendly offices of an ecclesiastical council were not invoked and the neighboring churches were permitted a brief respite from attendance upon the accustomed solemnities in this place.



Mr. Boutelle was greatly beloved. His sympathies were warm and constant, his friendship was enduring and his interest in the highest welfare of his charge was unabated. The memories of this pastorate are savory and imperishable. With generous impulses was joined the constant force of superior mental endowment guided by wisdom and prudence. Always instructive, sometimes eloquent, he was at once an able and a popular preacher. In 1862 he was elected to the Legislature from the Winchendon and Ashburnham district.

Rev. Thomas Boutelle, son of James and Abigail (Fairbanks) Boutelle, was born in Leominster, February 1, 1805. He completed his preparatory studies at New Ipswich and entering Amherst College at the age of twenty years he was graduated in the class of 1829 and at Andover Theological Seminary 1832. After a short engagement with the American Educational Society, he was ordained and installed over the Congregational church in Plymouth, May 21, 1834; dismissed March 23, 1837. His next charge was at Woodstock, Connecticut, where he remained twelve years. From 1850 to 1856 he labored at Bath, New Hampshire. At the close of his pastorate in this town he removed to Fitchburg and there conducted a bookstore, preaching occasionally as opportunity was offered. He died suddenly of heart disease November 28, 1866.

The supply of Mr. Boutelle was succeeded by the settlement of Rev. George E. Fisher who was installed May 21, 1863. It was a successful ministry. The church was united and increased in membership and the parish strengthened. His sermons were thoughtful and instructive and his social relations were firmly supported by enduring friendship. In 1867 he represented the district in the Legislature. His request for a dismissal reluctantly granted by the church and parish was approved by a council convened September 2, 1867.



Rev. George E. Fisher, son of Rev. George and Mary (Fiske) Fisher, was born in Harvard January 22, 1823. Pursuing his preparatory study under the tuition of his father and at the Lawrence Academy in Groton, he was graduated at Amherst College 1846, and at Andover Theological Seminary 1849. He was successively settled over the church in Rutland February 27, 1850; the North church in Amherst September 16, 1852; the church in Mason Village (now Greenville), New Hampshire, June 22, 1859. Following his removal from this town Mr. Fisher was installed over the church in South Hadley Falls September 2, 1867, and over the East church in Amherst December 10, 1879, where he remains an active and successful pastor.

Leaving Mr. Fisher, the ninth and last minister who received installation, the church and parish entered an era of supply as yet unbroken. The ministry has been continuous and not without a character of stability.

Rev. Moody A. Stevens was employed three years commencing in 1867. During this period the meeting-house was thoroughly repaired and it is probable the progress of his labor was considerably interrupted by the activities of the parish. He was a devoted man and he earnestly and faithfully labored for the highest good of his people. He was singularly free from ostentation, prudent in his methods and manifested a friendly interest in the welfare of his parish. Being a cultured musician he took a lively interest in church music and enlivened the social meetings with the spirit of song. His ministry was successful.

Rev. Moody A. Stevens, son of David and Elizabeth (Ryder) Stevens, was born in Bedford, New Hampshire, February 7, 1828. He fitted for college at Phillips Academy, Andover, and at Exeter, New Hampshire, and at twenty years of age he entered Dartmouth College. His



health failed and he did not complete a course of study at that time. For seven years he made a thorough study of music and was a student and instructor in Boston and in St. Johns, New Brunswick. Subsequently he completed his academical studies at the University of New York and is a graduate of Union Theological Seminary. In 1861 he was chaplain four months of the Second New York City Volunteers. He was ordained and installed over the church in Plymouth December 9, 1862. Since his labors in this town he has supplied at Anoka, Michigan, and at Minneapolis, Minnesota, and is now temporarily residing in Boston.

The following six years and until 1876 the pulpit was supplied by Rev. Leonard S. Parker. He is a man of strong convictions but generous in all his relations to his fellow-men. A diligent pastor, a frequent visitor in the schools, a willing supporter of every laudable enterprise the pastorate is a record of labor and substantial results. The Cushing Academy was opened while Mr. Parker was preaching in this place. June 10, 1874, he was elected a trustee of that institution and is now in duration of service the fourth member of the board.

Rev. Leonard S. Parker, son of William and Martha (Tenney) Parker, was born in Dunbarton, New Hampshire, December 6, 1812. He pursued his preparatory studies at the academies in Hampton and Hopkinton, New Hampshire, and at the Boston Latin School, and is a graduate of Dartmouth College and Oberlin Theological Seminary. In early life he enlisted in the anti-slavery movement, and his public efforts elicited the favorable notice of Giddings and other pioneers in the cause. He has been settled over churches in Mansfield, Ohio; Providence, Rhode Island; West Brookfield and Haverhill; and Derry, New Hampshire.

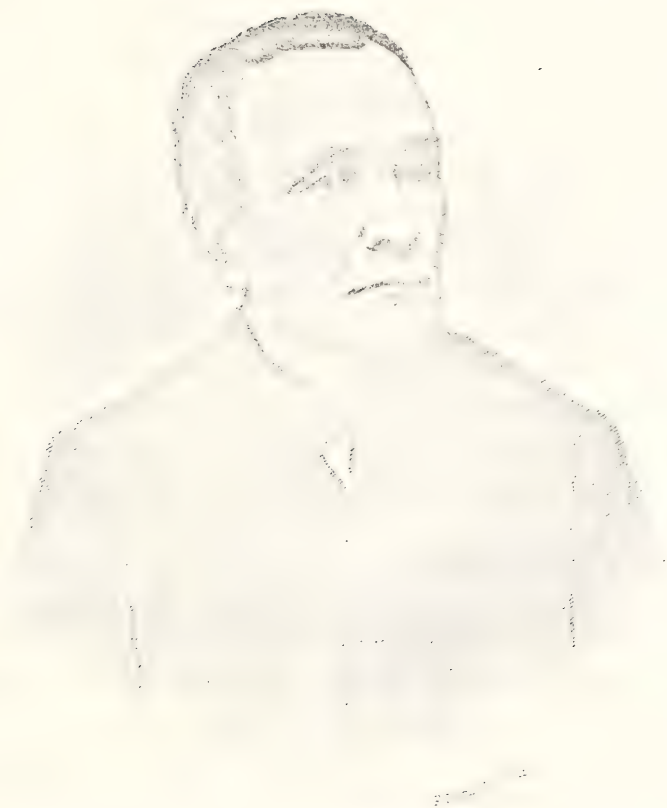


Following his ministry in this town he supplied at Miller's Falls and Turner's Falls, preaching each Sabbath at churches four miles distant and having a class in each Sunday-school. At the commencement of these labors both were mission churches, but during the ministry of Mr. Parker both became self-supporting and erected houses of worship. At present Mr. Parker is acting pastor of the Congregational church in Berkley.

Mr. Parker was immediately succeeded by Rev. Daniel E. Adams, who was acting pastor from July 16, 1876, to July 5, 1885. In duration the ministry of Mr. Goodyear exceeds that of Mr. Adams by only a few Sabbaths; and, except the prolonged ministry of Dr. Cushing, no other pastorate of this church has been continued an equal length of time. Assuming without hesitation the prerogatives of his sacred calling, Mr. Adams preached the whole truth but with a sincerity and kindness that provoked neither bitterness nor controversy. In his administration of the affairs of the church he pursued a pacific policy and his ministry was an era of concord and harmony. The memory of the fraternal relations continuously maintained in the church and parish is a living tribute to his judicious ministry in the pulpit and among the people. Of the one hundred and fifty funerals attended by Mr. Adams while in this town, the extreme age of two of the deceased is remarkable. The funeral of Mrs. Emma (Willard) Skelton, aged 103 years and 10 months, occurred November 7, 1881, and that of Colonel Charles Barrett, aged 97 years and 4 months, June 10, 1885.

Rev. Daniel E. Adams, son of Rev. Darwin and Catherine (Smith) Adams, was born in Hollis, New Hampshire, June 22, 1832. His grandfather was Daniel Adams, the author of Adams' Arithmetic and other popular school-books, and his mother was the daughter of Rev. Eli Smith of Hollis,





J. D. Crosby.



New Hampshire. Graduating at Bangor Theological Seminary 1860, Mr. Adams was ordained and installed over the Second Congregational church, Wilton, New Hampshire, December 5, 1860, and dismissed May 5, 1876. Since December 5, 1885, he has been acting pastor of the Pilgrim Congregational church of Southboro.'

During several of the intervals between the pastorates and when called upon by the sickness or absence of the stated supply, Rev. Josiah D. Crosby of this town has been a present help in every time of need. He supplied continuously during the absence of Mr. Davis in Europe and in the aggregate he has preached more Sabbaths than some of the pastors who have been in charge. Any record of the ministry of this church would be incomplete without a generous recognition of his willing service. His interest in the prosperity of the church and parish has been unfailing, and in matters of moment his advice frequently has been solicited and cheerfully given, and to the sick and the aged he has been an attentive friend.

Rev. Josiah Davis Crosby, eldest son of Fitch and Rebecca (Davis) Crosby, was born in Ashburnham, March 1, 1807. He pursued his preparatory studies at New Ipswich Academy and under the tuition of Ephraim M. Cunningham, Esq., then a lawyer in Ashburnham. At the age of fifteen years, he entered Amherst College and not completing the course in that institution he entered senior year at Union College graduating in class of 1826. He studied theology at Andover and was licensed to preach by the North Worcester Association in 1830. October 4, 1837, he was installed colleague to the venerable Rev. Laban Ainsworth over the church at Jaffrey Centre, New Hampshire, and was dismissed May 18, 1845.. He supplied at New Buffalo from October 1, 1857, to July 1, 1858, and from September 1, 1861, to September 1, 1862.



Here at the close of one hundred and twenty-five years the record ends. Nine ministers have been installed over the church and five have supplied about twenty-five years. The ministry of Mr. Cushing was a continent of time and in comparison the shorter pastorates were little islands in an adjacent sea. Yet each of them, influenced in some measure by its climate, has produced fruit in accordance with the tillage of the vineyard. The ministry has been continuous and in its character it has been able and substantial. If the pulpit has been graced by none who have electrified audiences and by the power of eloquence have swayed the passions of men, each in his sphere has been an acceptable preacher and, apparently, more concerned to secure the approval of his Master than the applause of men, has faithfully discharged his duty to the church and to the parish.

The offices of the church in forming and moulding character and in its ministrations to the souls of men form a part of the unwritten history of another world. The visible results of the record aggregate the admission of one thousand and twenty-six to its membership, beside the few names that escaped record during the ministry of Mr. Winchester. Of these, four hundred and two have died in full relations and four hundred and forty have been dismissed, a few with censure but generally with recommendation to other churches. There have been convened sixteen ecclesiastical councils for the settlement and dismissal of ministers and only one in arbitration upon a proceeding of discipline, and this church has been invited to meet in nearly one hundred councils upon the affairs of other churches.

Through all these years the church in Ashburnham has remained steadfast to its early principles, yet ready to accept the enlargement of its creed which has attended the progress of the age. In the succession of worshippers they have



borne the prayer and the praise of four generations. In blameless lives, in self-denial, in devotion and in courage they have honored the fathers who planted the vine in the wilderness. As a thousand tender memories warm the heart, the influence of their faith and devotion, as reflected in the record, will become the enduring inheritance of their successors.

Since the organization of the church the following persons have officiated as deacons :

Moses Foster,	1760,	resigned 1769, died Oct. 17, 1785.
Samuel Fellows,	1760,	removed to Shelburne 1772.
Tristram Cheney,	1769,	removed to Antrim, N. H., 1773.
John Willard,	1772,	died July 4, 1793.
Samuel Wilder,	1773,	died May 9, 1798.
Peter Stone,	1788,	removed to Townsend 1799.
Jacob Harris,	1788,	died in Windham, N. H., Sept. 26, 1826.
Elisha White,	1798,	died June 14, 1817.
Sherebiah Hunt,	1798,	died March 6, 1826.
Samuel Ward,	1817,	resigned 1843.
William J. Lawrence,	1819,	died July 8, 1844.
Daniel Jones,	1824,	dismissed to Union Church 1843.
John C. Glazier,	1836,	dismissed to Methodist Church, 1857.
Amos Taylor,	1843,	removed to Ashby 1851.
John A. Conn,	1849,	removed to Fitchburg 1863.
William P. Ellis,	1849,	resigned 1862.
Harvey Brooks,	1862,	removed to Gardner.
David Laws,	1865,	removed to Worcester 1871.
J. Newton Hastings,	1870,	resigned 1877.
Charles E. Woodward,	1870,	resigned 1877.

Since 1877 the deacons have been elected for a limited term but are eligible to reelection. The new system comprises the election of two deacons every other year for the term of four years. Under this arrangement the following persons have been chosen and are continued in office :

J. Newton Hastings,	1877.
Charles E. Woodward,	1877.
Mortimer M. Stowe,	1877.
George W. Eddy,	1883.



## CHAPTER IX.

### ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY. — CONTINUED.

THE FIRST MEETING-HOUSE. — VOIES CONCERNING THE EDIFICE. — PEWS CONSTRUCTED. — THE TOWN AS A PARISH. — THE SALARY OF MR. CUSHING. — THE HURRICANE. — THE SITE OF THE FIRST MEETING-HOUSE. — THE SECOND MEETING-HOUSE. — PROCEEDINGS 1791. — PAINTING OF THE MEETING-HOUSE. — TOLERATION. — DISSOLUTION OF THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TOWN AND THE CHURCH. — FIRST PARISH ORGANIZED. — CONTENTION OVER THE MINISTERIAL FUND. — THE THIRD MEETING-HOUSE. — LOCATION. — CONTINUED HISTORY. — THE EDIFICE REMODELLED. — THE PARSONAGE.

CONSPICUOUS in the annals of Ashburnham are the very early measures concerning the location and building of the first meeting-house. The worship of God in a stated form was a subject of earnest concern and solicitude. The "hill with a very fair prospect" was fitly chosen for the site of the temple in the forest. The work was not suffered to sleep. At a date which excites no small measure of surprise and far in advance of other settlements a meeting-house was built in 1739 or possibly very early in 1740. At a later period, the abandonment of the settlement and, owing to disturbance excited by continued war, the tardy return of the settlers did not permit its use for many years; but the edifice inviting occupancy remained as a monument to the enterprise and faith of its builders. True it was a long time before it was completed to the satisfaction of the proprietors, but through all the period of repairs and amendments it



could be used, and in the light of the times with some degree of comfort.

Rev. Dr. Cushing speaking midway between the event and the present has preserved the information that this was the first framed building erected in Ashburnham and that it was raised by only sixteen men. It may be inferred that an event like the raising of a meeting-house invited the whole settlement to the scene of action. It is more probable that some came from Lunenburg than that any settler remained at home. At this time the proprietors would not be sustained in the declaration that there were thirty men residing here. The vote of the proprietors instructing Mr. Mossman to nail up the windows and doors, and their committal of this meeting-house in the wilderness to the care of Him in whose service it had been reared and its wonderful preservation during the French and Indian War, add new interest to its history. Reversing the traditions of the temple of Janus, whose gates were thrown open in time of war and only closed under the mild commands of peace, our fathers closed their temple in this season of danger and opened it not until the land was quieted and messages of a sweeter peace were spoken beneath its roof. The records relate the progress of the improvements made upon the building in the early years of its occupancy and convey impressions which would be lost if stated in other language :

1752. Voted that all the windows saving the four lower windows in the south side of the meeting-house, which four windows are to be glazed, the others to be fully boarded up for the present.
1753. Voted that a tax of ten shillings on each right lawful money be paid by the third Wednesday in May next towards finishing the meeting-house.



1755. Voted that a tax of three shillings lawful money be laid on each right for doing something for the meeting-house to secure it from the weather.
1759. Voted that Mr. Elisha Coolidge be appointed to bord up the window places in the meeting-house with rough bords to keep out the wet and to make window shuts for two of the windows that are most convenient to let in the light when there shall be preaching there.

In 1760 a minister was settled and in commemoration of the event the sum of forty pounds, to which eight pounds was added the following year, amounting to more than the original cost of construction, was expended, and now for the first time was the house referred to as finished.

Moses Foster, Caleb Wilder and Caleb Dana, one resident and two non-resident proprietors, were chosen to conduct the repairs and assign the several pews to future owners. The work was substantially completed before July 31, 1760, for at that time the committee report the assignment of a part of the pews. The ponderous pulpit of the past century was built upon the north side of the room, stairs were erected to the unfinished galleries and there were doors in the centre of the three remaining sides. On the outside of the room, nineteen rectangular pews or enclosures, constructed after the custom of the time, occupied the spaces between the pulpit and the doors. Possibly there were two additional pews on the south side, making twenty-one in all. The central space surrounded by the pews was not occupied at this time. First west of the pulpit were the stairs, and next was the pew assigned to the ministry. The next was in the corner and was given to Caleb Wilder of Lancaster, and between that and the west door were the pews of Richard Dana and Moses Foster, Jr. The first pew south of the west door was assigned to Jeremiah Foster.



Passing by four, possibly five pews not assigned, the first one west of the south door is given to Caleb Dana of Cambridge who then owned eight rights in the township. No other pews were then disposed of except the five which filled the space between the west door and the pulpit and these were given to Jonathan Samson, Jonathan Gates, John Moffatt of Boston, Elisha Coolidge and Deacon Moses Foster. The pew of Mr. Moffatt was in the northwest corner and that of Deacon Foster was nearest the pulpit. The report of the committee, each of them having secured a good pew for himself, concludes with the remark, "the remaining pew ground we have not disposed of no other proprietors appearing whom we thought had the best right to pews there." This information explains the omission in their report of the names of James Coleman, Thomas Wheeler, John Bates, Wright Brown and other residents.

The German settlers, a majority of whom were members of the church, and others living on the independent grants, not being proprietors, could only come into possession of pews by purchase from some proprietor to whom one had been assigned. Further proceedings of the proprietors were obstructed by the act of incorporation and in this condition the meeting-house was transferred to their legal successors.

Assuming the powers and duties of a town, the inhabitants of Ashburnham in 1765 came into possession and control of the first meeting-house, and in accordance with the laws and usages of the times the town in its corporate capacity began to exercise the functions of a parish. In the settlement and dismissal of a minister the church had a concurrent vote, but the control and repair of the meeting-house, the salary of the minister and all other parochial affairs were debated and determined in open town meeting.



The maintenance of the stated ministrations of the Gospel involved an outer and an inner organization; the first embraced all the citizens of the town, while the latter was limited to the membership of the church. If, in the present light, such relations appear inconsistent it should be remembered that the people generally were in full sympathy with the creed of the prevailing church and that few, if any, were unwilling to pay their proportion of the tax assessed upon all for the support of the ministry. Whatever opposition the system finally provoked in this town, no suggestion of discontent was heard for many years. The early records are a continued narrative of concord and harmony. With unusual unanimity the people mourned the loss of their first pastor and joined in the selection and settlement of his successor.

During the many years the town continued to discharge the offices of a parish the settlement of Mr. Cushing was the only occasion it was called upon to assume the bustle and parade incident to an ordination of the olden time. That the town realized the solemnity of the occasion and was fully equal to the emergency is fully demonstrated. First, they chose one of the deacons to preside over the town meeting at which the important preliminaries were arranged, and then graciously admitted all the freeholders to the privilege of voting on the pending questions. The records portray the gravity of these proceedings.

Y<sup>e</sup> town Chose Mr. John Cushing to settle in y<sup>e</sup> ministry by a unanimous vote, also voted y<sup>t</sup> all y<sup>e</sup> freeholders Should vote in sum y<sup>t</sup> they Should Give to y<sup>e</sup> minister. Y<sup>e</sup> town voted to give Mr. John Cushing one Hundred thirty-three Pounds, six shillings and Eight Pence for settlement to be Payd in money and Labour.

It was eventually paid with great labor. After voting that the annual salary of Mr. Cushing should be sixty pounds



and at the end of seven years it should be increased to sixty-six and two-thirds pounds, the town made choice of Samuel Wilder, Elisha Coolidge and Ephraim Stone to communicate these propositions to Mr. Cushing. At a subsequent meeting it was ordered "y<sup>t</sup> y<sup>e</sup> first wednesday of november next Should be y<sup>e</sup> ordination" (November 2, 1768). "Y<sup>e</sup> town voted to send to seven churches to y<sup>e</sup> ordination." "Y<sup>e</sup> town voted to Give Capt. Wilder four Pounds to Provide for y<sup>e</sup> Counsel with this Proviso y<sup>t</sup> y<sup>e</sup> Cap<sup>m</sup> Should Keep an exact acompt of y<sup>e</sup> Cost and if y<sup>e</sup> town shall think y<sup>t</sup> he bears too big a Proportion y<sup>t</sup> they will Consider him."

The town further stipulated that the salary should be paid annually and that one-fourth of the settlement should be paid in labor and directed that "Mr. Keperlinger and Mr. Ephraim Stone and William Joyner should be y<sup>e</sup> Committee to see y<sup>t</sup> y<sup>e</sup> work be done as Mr. Cushing wants it." The financial problems being solved, there was remaining an article "to Chuse men to Keep y<sup>e</sup> Doors and Seets of y<sup>e</sup> meeting-house till y<sup>e</sup> Church and Counsel have taken their Seets," and a committee was chosen to carry into effect this respectful impulse of the town. It is not a duty, however, to conceal the fact that a majority of the voters on this occasion were members of the church and consequently in this polite attention to the church and council they were tendering an acceptable compliment to themselves.

The gratuity granted Mr. Cushing as a settlement in addition to his stated salary was in conformity with the customs of the time. It will be remembered that by the conditions of the original charter of this township, a right of land was bestowed on the first settled minister and another reserved for the use of the ministry. While Mr. Cushing continued to enjoy the use of one reservation the other had been given unconditionally to Mr. Winchester. The conditions were



similar in other towns. The custom of granting settlements was designed to bestow on the successors the same degree of favor they had granted to the first settled minister. To pay the gratuity granted Mr. Cushing the town borrowed the greater part of Colonel Caleb Wilder of Lancaster and subsequently cancelled the debt by clearing land with labor which was accepted in payment of taxes.

It is impossible to determine what benefit Mr. Cushing received from the use of the ministerial lands. One lot was sold in 1794 and in consideration of his consent to the sale the town thereafter furnished him thirty cords of wood annually or paid an equivalent in money. It is worthy of note that during the long ministry of Mr. Cushing the annual salary proposed in 1768 was never changed. On one or more occasions an increase was ordered but the vote was reconsidered before another payment was made. At the close of the Revolution remuneration was made for the depreciated currency and later the payments were rendered in Federal money, but from the close of the first seven years to the end of his ministry the salary was neither lessened nor increased. The salary of Mr. Winchester was sixty pounds which was paid by the proprietors until the date of incorporation. The town assumed the original contract and continued to pay the same amount.

Scarcely had the town succeeded to the control of affairs before a storm came and beat upon the meeting-house. Contrary to either scriptural precedent it neither stood nor fell. The gale in the summer of 1766 moved the building from its foundation but the injury was repaired. Referring to this event, Dr. Cushing states, "that in the summer of 1766 a hurricane passed over this hill and made a wreck of the meeting-house, and moved it to the north and to the east two or three feet. It was thought at first that it could not



be repaired but it was and stood until 1791;" or in the language of Tristram Cheney, "The house of public worship has lately been struck by a hurricane and the cost to repair cannot be less than £30." The following year and about three months before the death of Mr. Winchester, Samuel Fellows, Tristram Cheney and Elisha Coolidge were instructed to brace up the galleries and to repair the roof. A corner of a leaf of the records is gone and an account of these repairs is partially lost, but Jeremiah Foster, Jr., was paid four shillings and eight pence "for peeling the bark for the meeting-house," which probably was used in repairing the roof. The next repairs were under a vote to lay the floor in the front gallery, build a pair of stairs in the southwest corner and mend the glass. This was followed by an order in 1771, "to give Jacob Harris, Daniel Priest, Peter Joslin, Samuel Joslin, Oliver Wilder, Francis Dickerson and John Oberlock, Jr., the room in the front gallery, behind the seats that are now built, to build a long pew on." At the same meeting a committee was appointed "to seat the meeting-house according to age and pay."

In 1772, the meeting-house was underpinned in a substantial manner and to keep pace with the increase in population additional accommodations were arranged in the unoccupied portions of the galleries. At this time the glass was set in the remainder of the windows and the following year it was decreed that "eight persons that will be at the cost of finishing off the room behind the seats on the west side of the gallery may have it," and "likewise eight other persons may have the east side at the same rate."

Notwithstanding these repeated measures "to finish the meeting-house," it is probable that even in the estimation of our fathers it never was finished and that further work was delayed by the Revolution and later by the contemplation of



a new and more commodious house. In the condition set forth in the records and confirmed by tradition the town continued to occupy it and to compensate in some measure the decay of years until near the close of the century. Beneath its unpretentious roof Mr. Winchester was accustomed to meet his flock and here Mr. Cushing expounded the doctrines of his faith during the first twenty-three years of his prolonged ministry. Before its humble altar two hundred or more were admitted to the church and over six hundred children were presented for the ordinance of baptism. It is supposed that none are now living who ever entered within its primitive walls. It humbly served its day and generation and the first meeting-house in Ashburnham will ever remain a conspicuous figure in the annals of the settlement. Actuated by this sentiment, the town, in 1882, erected an appropriate tablet on the ground where it stood, both as a memorial of the past and as an index directing future generations to a locality around which the earliest and most sacred memories of the town will linger with unfailing delight. The ceremonies occurred July 4, and an appropriate address was delivered by Melvin O. Adams, Esq.

The inference is just and honorable to our fathers that a decision to remove the old house was not reached until the increasing wealth and population of the town demanded a more pretentious and commodious structure. How long or how earnestly the question of building a new meeting-house was debated, what arguments were presented on either side, with what reverence they regarded the old, or with what anticipations they contemplated a new house, cannot now be determined. The decision was not reached without serious conference and debate among individuals, but so far as the town is concerned, the decisive blow was struck without a note of warning or any bustle of preparation. A warrant



for a town meeting issued October 16, 1789, contains the first reference to the subject. It was then proposed "to see if the town are willing to build a new Meeting House and to pass such votes as shall be necessary for that purpose, viz. : to agree upon a spot of land to set said House and to choose Committees that may appear to be necessary to carry on the work." The meeting was assembled October 30 and the record proceeds : "The question being put whether the Town are willing to build a new meeting-house and it passed in the affirmative. Also voted to set the new house as near the other meeting-house as may be and not to place it on the same ground. Also voted to choose a committee of seven persons to make a draft of a meeting-house and chose Mr. Caleb Kendall, Mr. Samuel Foster, Lieut. Munroe, Samuel Wilder, Col. Lane, Mr. Joseph Whitmore and Lieut. John Adams for said committee and then said meeting was adjourned to the 6th day of November next." This committee is charged with grave responsibilities. To present a single plan that would be accepted by a majority of their townsmen is no ordinary undertaking.

While they are studying the models found in the older towns, we are left at liberty to notice the measure of respect shown them in prefixing titles to their names. With one exception all are honored with a title, and in the solitary omission Samuel Wilder modestly announces that he was the clerk who made the record. Formerly, the law of usage in regard to civic, military and ecclesiastical titles was inexorable. Whenever an individual was advanced from the plane of mediocrity to the honors of a deacon, a justice or military command, his name was subsequently spoken and written in connection with the distinguishing title which announced the rank and new importance of the individual. Samuel Wilder was a captain and a deacon but he was never styled Captain Wilder after he had reached the honors of a



deacon; but when he was commissioned a justice of the peace, Esquire Wilder rose in triumph over his former self. The following scholiums are apparent. In the former employment of titles many nice discriminations were made. A deacon was next in honor and importance above a captain, while an esquire easily ranked both the deacon and the captain and even contested honors with the major and the colonel.

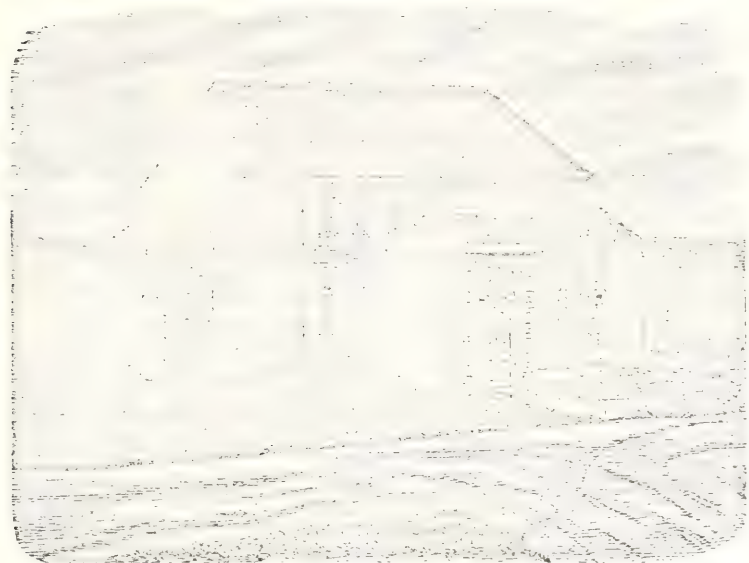
The town being assembled according to adjournment a matured plan was presented for the consideration of the town :

The Committee chosen the 30<sup>th</sup> of October last have made the following draft of a meeting-house viz : that said House be sixty feet in length and forty-five feet in width, twenty-six feet between joints with two porches and a cover over the front door ; with an elder's seat for people who are hard of hearing between the deacons seat and the pulpit ; 70 Pews : 46 below and twenty-four above. The Pews to be sold at Vendue to the highest bidder. Boards and Shingles and Clapboards to be got in the same way. The Committee propose to begin to fraim the house on the 20<sup>th</sup> of May in the year of our Lord 1791. The question was then asked whether the report should be accepted and it passed in the affirmative. It was then voted to choose nine men to be a committee to direct the building of the new meeting-house. Also voted to set the new meeting-house back so far as the burying yard wall and that the east end of the house be placed six feet east of the west end of the old house.

The length of both meeting-houses extended from east to west. The new house was a short distance north of the old and extended westerly fifty-four feet beyond it. There is no record of the choice of the committee of nine ordered by the town, but incidental references to the progress of the work, under the direction of a building committee, render it certain that such a committee was chosen. And at a subsequent meeting it was "voted to dismiss the old committee



for building the meeting-house and chose Samuel Wilder, Joshua Smith, Esq., and Samuel Foster a committee to compleat the work."



THE SECOND MEETING-HOUSE IN ASHBURNHAM, ERECTED 1791.

The new committee vigorously forwarded the work. The frame was raised May 24 and the house was completed November 4, 1791. Three days later the town accepted the final report of the committee, and the new meeting-house was dedicated with appropriate ceremonies on the tenth of the same month. In anticipation of the completion of the house the pews were sold and the proceeds of the sale was applied to the cost of construction. The records afford very little information concerning the cost of the house. The town appropriated in all one hundred and sixty pounds, and added to this sum the amount received from the sale of the old house which was torn down in October. It is therefore apparent that the greater part of the cost of the new meeting-house was paid with money received from the sale of the pews.



In 1808, the town paid Jacob Fairbanks for building four additional pews on the ground floor. These were sold at auction for the sum of three hundred and ninety-two dollars. The proceeds of this sale was the origin of the pew notes which became a bone of contention between the town and the parish.

To paint the new meeting-house in becoming color next demanded the attention and united wisdom of the town. Every citizen was privileged to vote and it was the concurrent taste of the town that "the color should be a pea green." The meeting was assembled at a season of the year when the vernal sun first begins to warm the brown and russet fields which gayly respond with the springing blade and bursting leaf, and in warm sympathy with nature as she paints the earth in the fresh liveries of green, the town produces its first poem. For some reason there was a delay in carrying the vote into effect. At a meeting assembled March 2, 1798, having escaped an inspiration to copy the yellow of the harvest or the crimson and gold of the autumn, and beholding the earth covered with the snow and ice of winter, they consistently resolve to reconsider the former vote and to paint the meeting-house white.

The town continued in the faithful performance of the auxiliary offices of a parish until 1824. The causes which led to the dissolution of the long established relations between the town and the church are apparent. The system was not in harmony with the spirit of our Government. In the dual organization, the members of the church and those in full sympathy with them were a majority of the town, and by their controlling voice the minority were annually taxed under a continued protest. The spirit of tolerance sometimes abated a resisted tax, but it presented no argument in support of the general principles involved. Indeed, the



majority, conscious of the injustice of the system, secured its continuance many years by the exercise of a commendable degree of tolerance to those who stoutly resisted, yet excusing the act in a plea of the sacred use to which the money was devoted, they exacted tribute from all who only passively objected. Like every revolution of a system the beginning was remote from the end and early efforts produced no immediate effect. Manifestations of discontent and the responsive answers of a spirit of tolerance gradually led to the abatement of so considerable a part of the taxes assessed that the system was practically overthrown some years before the outward forms were abandoned. During the last year of this nominal connection, warrants for town meetings for the transaction of parochial business were addressed to all the inhabitants qualified to vote who are members of the Congregational society. The town clerk attended these meetings and recorded the proceedings in the town records. Under this amended system, the town only assessed those for the support of the parish whose consent was first obtained. This procedure virtually created a voluntary parish for which the town was only an agent and in such capacity continued to call meetings and to assess and collect the annual taxes. In principle it was an amendment on the former system, containing the germ which speedily developed in the organization of a permanent religious society.

Among the many votes of the town expressive of public sentiment on the subject of the preceding paragraph is an order adopted in 1781 that Jacob Willard, Jacob Kiblinger, John Kiblinger, Nathan Bigelow, Jacob Constantine, Joshua Holden, Elisha Coolidge, Ebenezer Conant, Jr., and Jonathan Taylor be excused from the payment of a minister tax for that year. In 1797 Colonel Francis Lane was excused from the payment of the same tax. Immediately after the com-



pletion of the second meeting-house, in response to the request of certain individuals, the town "Voted that the Baptist Society have leave to meet in the new meeting-house on week days for religious worship by applying to the door-keeper for the keys. Also when it shall so happen that the Church and Congregation usually meeting in said house are destitute of a preacher and do not want to use said house on the Sabbath that said Baptist Society shall have leave to meet in said house." Encouraged by this proceeding the town was requested "to abate the minister tax laid on the non-resident lands owned by the Baptists." Upon this proposition the town voted in the negative. The final parochial service of the town occurred in 1823 and 1824. The town assumed the expenses of the funeral of Rev. Dr. Cushing amounting to \$65.45, and continued the salary until the following November. It also joined with the church in extending a call to Rev. George Perkins and directed the arrangements for his ordination. These offices at the eve of a dissolution of the relations between the town and the church were a fitting conclusion of a continued and honorable service. So far as the town was concerned, the only remaining topics of a kindred nature were the custody of the meeting-house and the control of the ministerial funds. The debate on these points between the town and the Congregational society can be presented more clearly after the other party to the controversy has been introduced.

The causes which suggested the organization of an independent parish consecutively follow those which led to the termination of the former relations. In the early history of the town nearly all the inhabitants were united in matters of religion and they adopted the readiest and most feasible method of sustaining public worship. The removal into town of families of other denominations and the alienation



of as many from the standing church and particularly the rapid growth of the Methodist society, and the bolder independence of those who adhered to neither the Orthodox, Methodist, Baptist nor any other creed, made it clearly apparent that every denomination should assume the control and management of its prudential affairs. The expediency of such an organization was seriously debated during the last years of the ministry of Dr. Cushing. Indeed, an association at that time was formed but "The Congregational Society or First Parish" did not have a legal existence until April 27, 1824, a short time after the settlement of Rev. George Perkins. At that date the society assumed the offices of a parish and has continued an efficient ally of the church with which it has been connected until the present time. The petition for a meeting of organization, dated April 8, 1824, was signed by Ivers Jewett, Oliver Marble, Charles Barrett, Elisha White, Fitch Crosby, Asa Woods, Grover Scollay, Joshua Townsend, Abraham Lowe, Joseph Rice and Doddridge Cushing. That eighty-one or more members were present at the first meeting is shown by a statement in the records that "the whole number of votes for a clerk of the parish was 81 and all for Charles Barrett." At the same meeting over which Timothy Stearns was called to preside, Joseph Jewett, Esq., Elias Lane and Walter Russell were selected for assessors. The duties of this office were more onerous than the term suggests. In addition to the assessment of taxes the assessors were expected to oversee all the prudential concerns of the society. At this meeting the sum of four hundred and fifty dollars was raised to pay the salary of the minister and by the following vote the unsettled questions with the town were introduced. "Voted that the assessors be a committee to look up the funds of the society laying in the hands of the selectmen."



This fund consisted of certain money and credits derived from the sale of the ministerial lands and the residue of the sale of the pews in the second meeting-house. This action of the society explains in a measure a vote of the town on the first day of November "to choose a committee of four to join with the selectmen to meet with the committee of the Congregational Society or First Parish to regulate the ministerial funds and the pew notes if they belong to said society and give them up to said society. Chose George R. Cushing, Dr. Abraham Lowe, Oliver Samson & Capt. John Willard. Voted to choose two more men to add to the committee and chose Joseph Jewett and Ivers Jewett." The selectmen for the time being were Silas Willard, Hezekiah Corey and John Adams, Jr.

This was an able committee and it represented both sides of the pending question. Mr. Cushing, Dr. Lowe, Joseph and Ivers Jewett were active members of the Congregational society, while Silas Willard, John Willard, Mr. Samson and Mr. Corey were equally prominent in the Methodist society. John Adams, Jr., held the balance of power in case the deliberations of the committee were influenced by selfish motives or denominational proclivities. It was undoubtedly at the suggestion of members of the Congregational society that the Jewetts were added to the committee in order to secure a stronger representation in its councils. The result of their deliberations was laid before the town at a meeting assembled April 4, 1825, in the following report:

The committee chosen at the town meeting on the first day of November last for the purpose of making a division of the ministerial fund and property belonging to the first parish met at Jewett & Woods' store, and beg leave to report viz: chose I. Jewett clerk.

2<sup>d</sup> On motion voted that all votes passed by said committee be laid before the town at their next annual March meeting.



3<sup>d</sup> Voted that the First Parish in said town of Ashburnham shall draw the interest of the Pew Notes.

4<sup>th</sup> Voted that the said First Parish shall draw the interest of one half of the ministerial and school funds.

5<sup>th</sup> Voted that the clerk and chairman sign the above report.

SILAS WILLARD, } Chairman of  
the Committee.

L. JEWETT, Clerk.

To the school fund the parish laid no claim and it is probable through careless methods in the conduct of town business it had been united so long with the ministerial fund that the identity of each was lost. Since the two funds were derived from the sale of equal parcels of land, neither would greatly exceed the other in value. It appears to have been the intention of the committee to reserve the interest of the school fund for the town and to bestow the interest of the ministerial fund on the parish. To these recommendations the town was not favorably inclined and refused to adopt any of the votes suggested by the committee. In the mean time the following petition had been presented to the selectmen and a town meeting had been called to consider the same questions in another form.

*To the Gentlemen, Selectmen of the town of Ashburnham :*

We the undersigned inhabitants of the said town request you to insert an article in your next March meeting warrant " To see if the town will give up to the Congregational Society or First Parish in said town the ministerial fund belonging to said parish it being for what the ministerial land was sold for, Also the notes that are in the Treasury which were given for pews sold in the meeting-house belonging to said Society or Parish with the interest on the aforesaid notes for one year last past."



ASHBURNHAM, Feb. 12, 1825.

JOSEPH JEWETT  
ABRAHAM T. LOWE  
DAVID CUSHING  
D. CUSHING  
OLIVER GREEN  
JONAS NUTTING  
• GRANT HOUSTON  
JOHN CALDWELL

An article was duly inserted in the warrant and a decision was finally reached :

Voted to give the ministerial fund and the pew notes to the First Parish in said town of Ashburnham agreeable to the request of Joseph Jewett and others and the selectmen are required to give orders accordingly.

In pursuance of this liberal course on the part of the town the funds were transferred to the custody and possession of the Congregational society. For ten years the decision was accepted as final and so far as evidence is found it was generally regarded as just and proper. From what motive the question was opened and the controversy renewed would be difficult to determine. In a warrant for the annual meeting in 1835 the heralds declare that the armistice is ended and the contestants who have rested on their arms for a decade are again summoned to renewed hostilities.

To see if the town will reconsider the vote that was passed in 1825 ; the town then voting that the pew notes and other property in fund, originally belonging to the town, into the hands of the clerk or treasurer of the First Parish and also to choose a committee to examine into all those funds and to see what part thereof rightfully belongs to the first parish and have the other put right.



On the first clause, the town took no action but chose a committee of five to make the specified examination. This committee consisted of George R. Cushing, Charles Hastings, Jr., Dr. Nathaniel Pierce, Silas Willard and Ebenezer Frost. Mr. Cushing was the only earnest friend of the parish and he refused to join with the others in the following report :

Your committee, chosen at the March meeting to investigate the state of the funds arising from the sale of school and ministry lands and other property &c, have attended to that duty and ask leave to report. Your committee find by the Proprietors Book of Records that the tract of land now called Ashburnham was granted to sixty soldiers or individuals or their heirs who served in the Canada Expedition as a bounty for their services by the General Court of the Province of Massachusetts Bay, and said Court in their grant reserved lots of land viz: one to the first settled Minister, one for the Ministry, one for the school; and the sixty Proprietors of the Township six miles square then called Dorchester Canada, gave one lot in each division (as it appears they made four divisions) it being four lots in all for the Minister, four for the Ministry and four for the school with Equivalents. Also the Proprietors granted one lot of ten acres where the meeting-house stands, provided the town build and keep a house thereon for Public Worship. The lots granted to the first settled minister seem to have been disposed of by the Rev. Mr. Winchester. Your committee find by the records that the town voted and chose agents to sell the public lands and we find by the records that some of the Ministry and School lots were sold and the interest applied in buying the Rev. Mr. Cushing's fire wood, and the said funds have ever since, except a small part, been retained in the hands of agents or persons then belonging to the first parish but have since alienated themselves from the old meeting-house Elsewhere for public worship and they have seized upon the school fund or a part thereof contrary to any vote of said town and carried it away with them. Therefore your committee, after due consideration.



resolves that the town pass a vote to return the funds that was given to said town for the use of the ministry to the hands of the town treasurer, there to remain a fund according to the appropriation. Resolved as we find by records and a parchment plan of said town, that the common land that has been sold and deeded for ministry land the amount of such should be returned to the treasury for its proper use. Resolved that as the town sold Pews in the old meeting-house on conditions that the amount they sold for should be funded and the interest of said fund be appropriated to repair the meeting-house, that the principal with the interest be returned to the treasury to be kept for that purpose. Resolved that those members or agents that have alienated from the old meeting-house elsewhere for public worship deliver to the hands of the town treasurer the amount of monies that accrued from the sale of school lands with the interest that it may be applied agreeable to the appropriation. Resolved that the town pass a vote and agree with some person residing near said meeting-house to take and keep the key of said house so that the Baptists may occupy the same for Religious Worship agreeable to a vote of said town.

Should the agents or members, belonging formerly to the first parish or old meeting-house, but have since alienated themselves with monies or property belonging thereto, refuse to comply with these terms,

Resolved that the town pass a vote authorizing the committee or agents to prosecute forthwith to final judgment.

CHARLES HASTINGS, JR.,	} Committee of said Town.
SILAS WILLARD,	
NATHANIEL PIERCE,	
EBENEZER FROST,	

May 4, 1835.

The report was accepted but none of the recommendations were adopted. The town clerk found employment in its entry upon the records but no other result ensued. However, the general issue, which was crushed beneath the



weight of this ponderous report, was referred to Charles Stearns, Asahel Corey and Kilburn Harwood, with instructions to meet a like committee of the Congregational society "with the view to ascertain more fully the rights of the town and parish in said funds."

An early report from this committee was also accepted but no trace of its recommendations has been found. At the succeeding meeting the town "voted to accept of the ministerial fund," but through a failure of the society to pass a responsive vote to give it up, the vote at once expressed the willingness and the inability of the town to secure it. Through the last stage of the controversy the society had the advantage of possession and during the prolonged demonstrations of the town they continued to fortify their position with a dignified silence. At other times the subject was debated in town meeting, but the remaining votes of the town were only repetitions of those that have been noticed. If any one desires to learn more of this dispute between the worthies of the town and the officers of the parish he may fan the embers of the controversy found in another chapter in connection with an account of the removal of the second meeting-house to its present location.

In 1832 the Methodist society completed its first house of worship in the village. Actuated we trust more from a spirit of emulation than of rivalry, the First Parish began to consider the expediency of removing its house from the old common to the centre of the village, and to rebuild the interior after a more modern plan. No sooner was the project proposed than a decided opposition was developed. The owners of the pews in the old house demanded payment for their property interest, and the town asserting an undefined control of the house frowned upon the society in the pretence of any right to remove it or to exercise



any control over it beyond its accustomed use where it stood. And the fact that the town had no clear idea of its own authority in the premises, left it free to assert any pretension and to oppose the society at every point. Foreseeing the difficulties that would attend any other course of proceeding, the society early and wisely decided to build a new house and subsequently to surrender the old house and the pending demands of the pew owners to the town.

In September, 1832, the society postponed but did not abandon the enterprise, and while the intentions of the parish were beginning to ripen into an early execution a voluntary association of its members proposed to build the house on their own responsibility. It only remained for the society as an organization to grant the gentlemen leave to proceed and to select a location for the new meeting-house. In February, 1833, the following propositions were adopted :

Voted that certain individuals who are disposed may build a new meeting-house agreeable to their proposition which is that the expense of building be divided into twenty shares and after the house is completed to sell or let the pews as they have opportunity.

Voted to choose a committee of five to select a suitable location for said meeting-house and chose

GEORGE G. PARKER,	}	Committee.
SAMUEL WARD,		
JOHN CALDWELL,		
HOSEA GREEN,		
JOHN C. GLAZIER,		

Voted to adjourn for one week from this day at one o'clock in the afternoon.

Feb. 11, met according to adjournment, the committee presented their report which was read.

Voted that the meeting-house may be built on either of the two





FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.



lots — Sawyer's or the one George R. Cushing proposes. The Sawyer lot was selected.

Other locations were considered by the committee but were not embraced in their report. One of these was on the opposite side of Main street; another a short distance south of the Powder House; another at the junction of the road from North Ashburnham and Main street; and another where the barn of Nathaniel Pierce now stands. The amount paid Mr. Sawyer for the lot was two hundred and twenty-five dollars. The addition to the lot on the north was presented in 1869 by Colonel Charles Barrett. The names of the persons who assumed the responsibility and proceeded to build the meeting-house do not appear in the records. The twenty shares were taken as follows: Thomas Hobart, two shares; Reuben Townsend, Charles Barrett, Ebenezer Flint, George G. Parker, Dr. William H. Cutler, Joseph Jewett, Harvey M. Bancroft, Philip R. Merriam, Philip R. Merriam, Jr., Harvey Brooks, Elijah Brooks, Samuel Woods, Samuel S. Stevens, Joel Brooks, Horatio J. Holbrook, Hosea Green, Levi Rice, Edmund Sawyer, one share each.

Under the direction of this efficient organization the present meeting-house was begun in the summer of 1833 and speedily completed. It was dedicated February 19, 1834. The cost of construction exceeded the amount received from the sale of the pews, but the loss was sustained by the organization that had volunteered to build the house. The heavy, clear-toned bell which still hangs in the belfry was purchased by subscription in January, 1834, at an expense of five hundred and seventeen dollars.

The new meeting-house being completed, and the former entangling alliances with the town dissolved, the parish



entered upon an era of concord and quietude. Occasionally called upon to join with the church in the dismissal or settlement of a minister, its chief and successful employment has been to raise money for the payment of current expenses. At times the money has been secured with difficulty but the parish, by a conciliatory policy and by consulting its members in regard to methods of taxation and voluntary subscriptions, has met its obligations and has seldom suffered its fortunes to be dimmed by the cloud of debt. Through the indifference of many the burden has rested more heavily upon others, yet at all times a reliant purpose has met every obstacle and overcome every difficulty. During the past sixty years the salary paid the minister has been increased from time to time from four hundred and fifty to twelve hundred dollars.

The meeting-house was thoroughly remodelled in 1869. After an ineffectual discussion of many plans and several inoperative votes of the parish a number of gentlemen generously volunteered to become responsible for the expense of rebuilding the house. The repairs were immediately made under the direction of Ohio Whitney, Jr., William P. Ellis, Jerome W. Foster, George C. Winchester and Addison A. Walker. The amount expended was about thirteen thousand dollars. The deficit, after the sale of the pews, was assumed and soon paid by the parish. At this time a superior pipe organ was purchased by subscription. The parsonage was purchased in 1864, and in it are invested the ministerial fund received from the town and the legacy of Mrs. Lucy Davis.



## CHAPTER X.

### ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY. — CONTINUED.

THE METHODISTS. — THE FIELD AND THE SITUATION. — THE EARLY PREACHERS. — THE FIRST MEETING-HOUSE. — THE SECOND MEETING-HOUSE. — THE MINISTERS.

THE UNION CHURCH. — THE ELEMENTS COLLECTED. — THE MEETING-HOUSE. — A CHURCH EMBODIED. — THE EARLY PREACHERS. — ELDER EDWARD A. ROLLINS. — REV. A. A. WHITMORE. — TEMPORARY SUPPLIES. — REV. DANIEL WIGHT. — THE PARISH. — PERSONAL NOTICES. — THE DEACONS.

THE BAPTISTS. — PREACHERS WITHOUT PAY. — STEPHEN GIBSON. — DIS-INTEGRATION.

ADVENTISTS. — THEIR BELIEF. — NO CHURCH ORGANIZATION.

THE CATHOLICS. — FIRST SERVICES IN THIS TOWN. — PURCHASE A MEETING-HOUSE. — REV. JOHN CONWAY.

METHODIST CHURCHES were organized in many of the towns in this vicinity in rapid succession. It was during the last decade of the past century. In its outline features the history of the introduction of Methodism and of the growth and progress of the churches planted by the early preachers is the same throughout New England. Until the arrival of the pioneer preachers of a new faith, in every town there was one church of the standing order which, founded soon after the settlement of the town, had remained the sole occupant of the field. Over each of these churches the "learned orthodox minister" was settled for life and labored without a rival. The orthodox minister of the olden time was an earnest and solemn laborer, austere in manner,



dignified in bearing; faithful and diligent as a pastor he labored for his people with singleness of purpose. With formal precision he visited the sick and comforted the mourner in learned phrases. His counsel was the voice of wisdom, while his sympathies were congealed in the solemnity of his presence. Standing half way between God and man, there was a fixedness about him that invited the reverence and commanded the homage of the people. His sermons, logically arranged, were earnest and solemn appeals to the reason of his hearers. From the lofty pulpit of the olden time he maintained his accustomed eminence among his flock and through the week he walked in even lines above them. They respected him, addressed him, thought of him with reverence, and if any loved him they loved him with an admixture of awe that suffered no passage of the gulf that separated the minister from the hearts of the people. If neither the example of his life nor the spirit of his discourse invoked the emotions or aroused the sudden impulse, he moulded and solidified the character and persuaded men to live under the guidance of principle and a rational sense of duty.

The minister of that day is a character prominent and still honored in the annals and traditions of the past. In the midst of his supremacy came the pioneer preacher of Methodism. These heralds of a new creed announced their message with plainness of speech and simplicity of manner. Their early success sprang more from the manner of the man than from the matter of their discourse. They lived among the people and when not engaged in exhortation they conversed and mingled with them. They neither spoke from pulpits nor held themselves aloof from their fellow-men. They preached in dwellings, in barns and in the groves. While preaching they stood on a level with their hearers.



Wisely assuming that the clergy of the standing order had faithfully instructed the masses and inculcated among them a general knowledge of the Christian religion they asserted the tenets peculiar to their sect. If they appealed to the emotions of men they satisfied a hunger of the soul that the teachings of the older school could not appease; and if they became earnest and impassioned in manner they felt a responsive echo in the worship of the multitude.

With such labor and under such conditions the early Methodist preachers found adherents in every community. They rapidly planted churches and confiding them to the self-sustaining influences of the class-meeting they passed on to new fields and to renewed conquests. Over these infant churches a preacher was not assigned for a stated time. Indeed the earlier preachers were not fixed in their fields of labor, but were transferred so rapidly from one station to another that we gain but glimpses of their approaching or retiring presence. When assembled for worship, mysteriously there came a minister to preach to them; from whence he came, or where he went, or the name of the roving preacher, is difficult to determine.

The introduction of Methodism into Ashburnham in method and in the attending conditions was similar to the general work and success of the youthful church throughout the country. In a historical discourse delivered at Ashburnham July 9, 1882, Rev. Stephen Cushing has succinctly stated the prominent events connected with its growth and progress. To that discourse is credited many of the events in the following paragraphs. Within five years from the introduction of Methodism into New England, Rev. John Hill preached the first Methodist sermon at the house of Lemuel Stimson in the north part of the town. This was in the autumn of 1793. Early in the following year a society of



eight members was constituted and soon meetings began to be held with considerable regularity at the house of Silas Willard, Esq. In the autumn of 1796 Lorenzo Dow preached to the infant society in this town. This famous preacher was then nineteen years of age. The following extract from his journal refers to this occasion: "October 23, 1796, I spoke in Hardwick to about four hundred people; thence to Petersham and Winchendon, to Fitchburgh and likewise to Notown where God gave me one spiritual child. Thence to Ashburnham, where we had some powerful times."

In 1800 a quarterly meeting attended by Rev. John Broadhead, a presiding elder, was held in the town. At this time the church embraced a membership of fifty or more. Three years later Bishops Asbury and Whatcoat preached at the house of Mr. Willard by whom they were entertained. Preaching was maintained in the north part of the town and a society with increasing numbers was in existence thirty-eight years. The preachers were frequently transferred to other fields in the intervals between the formal assignments by the Conference. From the records of such appointments and transfers it is found that during this time sixty-five preachers had been designated for Ashburnham and dependent societies. A society was organized in Westminster in 1814 and a few families in the south part of the town were included in its membership.

In 1831 the Ashburnham and Westminster societies were made a station and a pastor assigned them. This arrangement was of short duration and only one appointment, that of Rev. Nathan B. Spaulding, was made. The following year the Ashburnham society, having proposed to build a meeting-house at the centre of the town, was made a station and has continued to the present time an independent organization. It was during the year of the union with the West-



minster society, and perhaps suggested by the inconvenience of that arrangement, that active measures for building a meeting-house were proposed and favorably entertained. At that time the trustees were Joshua Burgess, Luther Barrell, John Kibling, Lemuel Whitney, John Willard, James Puffer, Silas Willard, Lemuel Stimson, Stephen Cushing, Oliver Samson and Hezekiah Corey. A considerable sum of money was raised by subscription and the work fairly begun in the autumn of 1831. The house was completed without suspension of the work and was dedicated July 4, 1832. The dimensions were fifty-six by forty-one feet.

Again, thirty-eight years is an epoch in the history of the Methodist church of Ashburnham. The present commodious house of worship was erected in 1870. It was then seventy-six years since the organization of the church in this town. Dividing the time in two equal portions, was the building of the first meeting-house in 1832. The first span of time had witnessed the growth of the church from a class of eight persons to one hundred members. Through many discouragements they had existed and had increased. At all times their ardor had been unabated. Through all these years of their early history they found many occasions for devout gratitude for the past and buoyant hope for the future. During the second period, or while occupying the first meeting-house, they were attended with continued prosperity. The visible results are witnessed by many seasons of spiritual power and by frequent and considerable addition to the membership of the church.

At the close of the second epoch, the erection of the present church edifice was undertaken. In 1869 the site for the proposed building was purchased and the foundations were laid. From the board of trustees Reuben Puffer, Nathaniel Eaton and Andrew J. Smith were chosen a build-



ing committee, to which Charles Winchester was joined. Under the management of these gentlemen the work upon the building was begun in the spring of 1870 and the house was substantially completed during that year. The interior decoration and furnishing were completed the following summer and the house was dedicated July 20, 1871. The cost of construction was about thirty thousand dollars which far exceeded the first estimates and the burden fell heavily upon the society. The organ, from the factory of Hook and Hastings, was presented by Charles Winchester. During the succeeding ten years the debt contracted in constructing an expensive edifice was gradually reduced, but was not fully paid until during the ministry and through the efforts of Rev. Nathaniel B. Fisk. Two members of the church contributed at this time a sum exceeding the entire cost of the first meeting-house.

From 1870 to the present time the outward history of the church has been uneventful. The stated ministrations have been maintained and commendable donations have been credited to the benevolence of the society. The spiritual history of all these years and the influences of the church over the souls of men are among the unwritten revelations of another world. The minutes of the Conference contain the names of sixty-five preachers who were assigned previous to 1832 to the station to which Ashburnham belonged. It is evident that several of them after a brief labor here were transferred to other stations; and, possibly, a few of them did not even arrive here before they received new appointments to other places. Nor were any of them assigned unreservedly to the Ashburnham church but to the circuit to which this church belonged. Very few of them were temporarily resident here. Their labors were divided among several societies of which this was the strongest and most prominent.



Since Ashburnham became a station in 1832, a pastor has been assigned without reservation and has lived during the term of his appointment among his charge. The number of these appointments is thirty-four. Of these seventeen, including the present pastor, have remained one year, fourteen two years and under the modern revision of the rules, three have received a third appointment. After an interval of several years Rev. Pliny Wood and Rev. Austin F. Herrick were returned to this town and are twice enumerated, but the brief pastorate of Rev. H. B. Skinner who filled an unexpired appointment is not included. All were worthy, exemplary pastors. With varied gifts and acquirements, none have failed in duty to their charge, and all have been fellow-laborers with men of their own and other denominations in the reforms and benevolence of their time.

The names of the pastors and the membership of the church since Ashburnham was made a station are as follows :

PASTORS.		MEMBERSHIP.
1832.	Nathan B. Spaulding	101
1833.	Hebron Vincent	107
1834-5.	John W. Case	120
1836.	Charles Noble	130
1837-8.	William R. Stone	148
1839.	William P. White	121
1840-1.	Horace Moulton. H. B. Skinner, 6 months	180
1842.	John W. Merrill	184
1843.	Newell S. Spaulding	205
1844-5.	Howard C. Dunham	155
1846.	William B. Olds	142
1847.	David Kilburn	108
1848-9.	Pliny Wood	110
1850.	Jonathan L. Esty	114
1851-2.	Moses P. Webster	106
1853-4.	Cyrus L. Eastman	116



1855-6.	Austin F. Herrick	130
1857.	Lorenzo White	138
1858-9.	Pliny Wood	135
1860-1.	Ichabod Macey	131
1862-3.	William Pentecost	137
1864.	Jonas M. Clark	122
1865-6.	John A. Lansing	153
1867-8.	Walter Wilkie	180
1869.	Nathan D. George	170
1870.	Joseph W. Lewis	149
1871.	L. P. Causey	140
1872-4.	Austin F. Herrick	171
1875-6.	James W. Fenno	165
1877-9.	William H. Cook	159
1880-2.	Nathaniel B. Fisk	149
1883.	John H. Mansfield	149
1884.	Emory A. Howard	153
1885.	Austin H. Herrick	147

THE UNION CHURCH. — The causes which led to the building of a meeting-house and the embodiment of a church at North Ashburnham are mainly apparent at the present time. It is probable and it is reasonable to presume that the controlling motives were sustained and encouraged by many minor impulses which are neither reflected in the record nor preserved in the memory of the few now living who were active in the initial proceedings. A half century ago that portion of the town was more populous than at present and in that community were several men of influence and enterprise. The families residing in that vicinity for a long time had been sensible of the burden of the distance that separated them from the church at Ashburnham Centre to which they belonged. These, for many years, had frequently yet timidly suggested some measures of relief. Among them were a few families who were not in full sympathy with the



controlling influences of the parent church, and joined with these were others not allied to the church at the Centre nor were they Congregationalists.

The latter class, actuated both by conscience and convenience, were ready to join in the organization of a union church with tenets inviting an evangelical alliance. There were many meetings and conferences of which no record was made, and concerning which very little accurate information can be secured. The work which met them at the outset was the building of a meeting-house and to this undertaking they directed their efforts with courage and enthusiasm. The edifice built for the proprietors by Ohio Whitney, Jr., and Samuel Howard was completed in 1842 and dedicated in December of that year. In the new house preaching was maintained by voluntary effort for several months. The church was embodied February 21, 1843. The creed was evangelical and while it omitted any declarations upon doctrinal questions that were the distinguishing tenets of the Congregational, Methodist and Baptist faith, it was an unequivocal expression on all points entertained in common by those churches. The original membership was fifty-five, of whom a majority was of Orthodox Congregational antecedents and the remainder were Methodists and Freewill Baptists. Of this membership twenty-five were received by dismissal and recommendation from the parent church; a few from the Freewill Baptist church and several from the Methodists. During the early years of its existence the church and parish had no settled minister.

The earlier preachers were Rev. William Hills, who remained several months, and Rev. Samuel Cole, who was acting pastor three years. Early in the year 1846 Elder Edward B. Rollins was hired to preach one year. This ministry introduced an era of discord. The season of har-



mony and fraternal relations, which crowned the early history of the church with continued blessings, was abruptly ended and for many years the bitterness of feeling then engendered was frequently the cause of renewed contention. Following Mr. Rollins, Rev. Josiah D. Crosby preached one year and he was succeeded by Rev. A. A. Whitmore, who remained four years and was the first minister installed over the church. Succeeding Mr. Whitmore was a prolonged era of supplies and at times the records afford ample evidence that the salary of the minister was raised with great labor and effort. During this period the pastors were Rev. Josiah W. Brown, Rev. Woodbury and Rev. Asa Barnes.

In 1860 the original church, known as the Union Church, was disbanded. The few members remaining, who were found prepared for continued effort, at once proceeded to organize a new church, to be known as "The Second Congregational Church of Ashburnham." The creed was amended and the church was embodied June 19, 1860. The number of members received at the time of reorganization was eleven. The number was small and the burden comparatively heavy; yet, aided by the Congregational Home Missions, they succeeded in overcoming many obstacles and for several years in maintaining the stated ministrations of the gospel.

Rev. Samuel H. Peckham supplied the desk for a season and in 1863 Mr. George H. Blake was made pastor in charge and engaged for one year with an understanding that, unless for cause, the relation should be continued indefinitely. Soon after Mr. Blake began his labors he was ordained in the ministry but was not installed over the church and the existing relations were abruptly terminated before the close of the first year.

Rev. Daniel Wight, having supplied a few Sabbaths, accepted a call extended with great unanimity and was



installed June 22, 1864. The relation was profitably and fraternally continued until April 1, 1871. Immediately preceding this ministry the creed and rules of procedure were amended, and during its continuance the affairs, both of the church and the parish, were promptly and prudently administered.

Succeeding Mr. Wight, Rev. Charles Peabody was made an acting pastor and continued his labors until May 16, 1875. He was succeeded by Rev. William T. Lewis who maintained a dual relation with this church and the church in Winchendon Centre.

The preliminary conferences in regard to the maintenance of stated preaching at North Ashburnham led to an early decision to build a meeting-house. A society was immediately formed and under its direction the meeting-house was soon erected. In 1847 the society became a legal corporation under the name of "The Proprietors of Union Meeting-House." Of this organization, Colonel Enoch Whitmore was clerk for many years and until the organization was lost through a failure to hold annual meetings and elect officers as required by law. In 1868, and during the ministry of Mr. Wight, the organization was revived and assumed the name of the "North Parish of Ashburnham." It is apparent, however, that there was an active society during the years immediately preceding the new organization, but there is a hiatus in the records from 1857 till 1868. The new parish held annual meetings for a short time and then suffered the organization to lapse and at this time it has not been revived.

The bell was purchased by subscriptions obtained in the autumn of 1867 and was placed in position January 23, 1868, by Ohio Whitney and Samuel Howard as a part of their original contract for building the meeting-house. The bell soon failed, but a new one was furnished by the makers, without charge, which was hung in the belfry January 28,



1869. It is a steel combination bell and weighs about eight hundred pounds. The expense attending its purchase and hanging was \$265.51.

During the existence of this church and parish only two ministers have been installed and no effort has been made to announce the names of all who have been acting pastors for short periods of time. The church and society are indebted to Isaac D. Ward for the careful preservation of the files and records from which the information in these paragraphs was mainly secured.

Rev. Alfred Alonzo Whitmore, son of Luke Hayden and Phoebe (Cowing) Whitmore, was born near Geneva, Ontario county, New York, July 7, 1817. The family removed in 1825 to the Territory of Michigan and settled near Ann Arbor. Attending the local schools in youth, Mr. Whitmore entered the school at Oberlin, Ohio, in 1838 and was a student in the several departments eight and one-half years, graduating from the academical department 1843 and the theological school in 1846. After a brief supply in several places he began his labor with this church in 1848 and was installed October 18 of that year. He was an earnest, faithful pastor and a plain and acceptable preacher. He was dismissed at his request August 25, 1852. After supplying a few months at Richmond he removed to Ohio, in 1864 to Illinois, and since 1875 he has resided at Anita, Iowa, where he completed a successful ministry in 1880.

Rev. Daniel Wight, a son of Daniel and Zillah (Goulding) Wight, was born in Natick, September 18, 1808. He is a graduate of Harvard University, class of 1837, and of Andover Theological Seminary 1840. His first charge was in Scituate where he was ordained and installed September 28, 1842. Here he labored successfully sixteen years. Commencing 1859 he was stated supply two years at Boylston, and subsequently labored for the American Board



among the Seneca Indians. On account of the failing health of his wife he returned to Natick in 1863 and immediately after he was called to preside over this church. His prudent councils, his untiring interest for the welfare of his charge and his earnest labor in this town will be held in grateful remembrance. At the completion of his ministry here he returned to Natick where he continues to reside.

During the history of the church five have been called to serve as deacons. Daniel Jones was chosen deacon at the organization of the church. Soon after, under the adoption of a rule to choose one deacon each year for a term of two years, Gilman Jones and Joseph Wetherbee were chosen. Except one year Deacon Jones was continued in office by reelection until his removal from town, and in 1845 John C. Davis was elected and was continued in office until his death June 19, 1883. After 1849 the officers were elected for an indefinite period. Upon the reorganization of the church in 1860, Deacon Davis was continued in service and Horace Balcom was also elected to the office.

THE BAPTISTS.—At an early date there were several families in this town who were styled Baptists. Others of the same faith were residing in Ashby and in Fitchburg. They maintained preaching with considerable regularity during the closing years of the past and the early years of the current century. Professing an unbelief in the maintenance of a salaried clergy they derived their religious instruction from voluntary labor, and in the absence of a minister, which was usual, they enjoyed the exhortations of their own number. Stephen Gibson of Ashby was gifted in this direction and for many years he preached to them with more acceptance than compensation. In 1795, when this sect was most numerous, there were twenty families in this town and as many in Fitchburg connected with this society. They held



their meetings in dwelling-houses and in school-houses near the limits of the adjoining towns, but they never erected a church edifice. The meeting-house built in the north part of Fitchburg, about 1810, was erected and occupied by an organization of Freewill Baptists with whom the older society had little sympathy. The families who waited upon the ministrations of Stephen Gibson and other laymen belonged to a sect which, one hundred years ago, found a few adherents in many New England towns. Professedly they were Calvinistic Baptists and, doubtless, their adherence to the cardinal doctrines of that church fully sustained their right to the name. But the distinguishing feature of their faith, and one in which they were not in harmony with the Baptist church, was an unyielding hostility to the prevailing custom of providing a stated support of the ministry.

Professing that it was "a sin to preach for hire" they relied upon itinerant and local preachers who labored without compensation. No doubt this feature of their creed was fostered and intensified by the intolerant laws of the State which compelled all to contribute to the support of the standing order. Those belonging to this society were excellent people. Some of them were influential and prominent citizens. As soon as the spirit of toleration repealed the compulsory statutes in relation to the support of the clergy, in a great measure the ground of their offence was removed and they gradually became absorbed in other religious societies. In later years there have been Baptists of the modern school in this town but there has been no other organization.

SECOND ADVENTISTS. — For several years there have been a number of families in this town who are known as Second Adventists. They have occasional preaching at South Ashburnham but have no church organization. In religious



belief they are closely allied to the Evangelical churches and are not in full sympathy with the Seventh Day Adventists whose annual conference is held at Battle Creek, Michigan. The members of the denomination in this town observe the first day of the week and cordially unite with the other denominations in the Sabbath-school and in forwarding every good work.

THE CATHOLICS began to maintain religious service in this town in 1851. At that time the number of families was small and they assembled at private houses. With the progress of years the number has increased and for a number of years service was held in the Town Hall with considerable regularity. In 1871 they bought the house they now occupy of the Methodist society. The interior has been remodelled and thoroughly repaired. The congregation is steadily increasing and the visible influence of the service is in the support of good morals. The church is under the spiritual direction of Rev. John Conway who is also in charge of the church in Winchendon. The Catholics, having no cemetery in this town, bury their dead in Fitchburg and in Winchendon.



## CHAPTER XI.

### SACRED MUSIC.

A TRUTHFUL REMARK OF NO GREAT ACCOUNT. — EARLY ACTION IN RELATION TO SACRED MUSIC. — Y<sup>e</sup> PITCH-PIPE. — EARLY HYMN-BOOKS. — NEW TUNES. — FIRST CHORISTERS. — DEACONING THE HYMN. — BASS VIOL. — MUSICAL FAMILIES. — LATER MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHOIR. — THE METHODIST CHOIR.

THE men of Ashburnham have produced their most stirring music in their frequent town meetings, but being of a character unsuited to waft, on the wings of praise, the sentiment of sacred song it cannot be considered under the head of church music. Holding an easy rein over their proclivities in the arena of debate they have made ample amends in curbing opposition to the innovations which have marked the progress and elevation of sacred music in this place. The first reference in the records to this subject occurs at an early date :

To see if the town are willing that the singers should sett together in the Public Worship in any part of the gallery that shall be thought proper.

Voted that the singers shall have the front gallery to set in, in time of Public Worship viz: the men's side as far back as the long pew.

Thus, as far back as 1773 and as far back as the long pew, the town provided for the accommodation and recognized the existence of a choir. That the singers increased



in numbers is seen in a vote a few years later "to let the singers have the front part of the gallery to set in that they may not be so crowded."

In 1774 the church by vote consented to the use of the pitch-pipe "if the chorister please to pitch the tune" and at the same time it was ordered, the records say by a considerable majority, "that no new tunes should be introduced for twelve months and that they should be confined to the tunes that are already in use." There was opposition to the last vote and the records explain that to relieve the minds of many on this point the pastor was requested to name a proper tune for every psalm that was sung. The same year and in connection with these votes a proposal to introduce the verse of Dr. Watts was defeated. The version of Tate and Brady remained in use until near the close of the century. This version, a literal arrangement of the Psalms and some other portions of the Old Testament, with modest pretension to metrical composition, was employed in the Presbyterian and Reformed churches of Great Britain for a long time, and until eventually supplanted by the psalms and hymns of Dr. Watts it was in general use in the churches of New England. In that version our fathers found the familiar lines of the Scriptures and they regarded with grave suspicion the same sentiments expressed in new forms of speech. A copy of the ancient version is seldom found and many of the present generation have little idea of the poetry which the fathers were accustomed to sing. A part of the fifth and the sixty-fifth Psalms, in the version of Tate and Brady, will afford some idea of the general character.

"Lord, in thy wrath, rebuke me not,  
Nor in thy hot wrath chasten me,  
Lord, pity me, for I am weak;  
Lord, heal me, for my bones vex'd be,



Also my soul is vexed sore ;  
How long, O Lord, wilt thou me forsake?

“Return, O Lord, my soul release ;  
O, save me for thy mercy’s sake.  
In death no mem’ry is of thee  
And who shall praise thee in the grave.  
I faint with groans ; all night my bed  
Swims : I with tears my couch wash’d have,  
Mine eyes with grief is dim and old,  
Because of all mine enemies,  
But now depart away from me  
All ye that work iniquities.

“Silence to thee ; thy praise O God,  
In Sion, paid shall be.  
The vow to thee, who hearest prayers,  
All flesh shall come to thee.  
Works of iniquity prevail  
Against me sore do they,  
But as for our transgres-si-ons,  
Thou shalt them purge away.”

The opposition to the introduction of new tunes is easily understood and was prompted by an impulse which commands respect. For many years our fathers had reverently sung their praises in the familiar strains of York, St. Martin’s, Mear and a few other substantial compositions. By constant use these tunes had become sacred to them and a sentiment of reverence triumphed over their musical taste and the allurements of new compositions. The earliest chorister, of whom there is any certain information, was William Benjamin. He was a resident here at the settlement of Mr. Winchester and remained until 1785 when he removed to Vermont. He led the choir several years and was succeeded by Joseph Jewett, Esq., and Lieutenant John Adams. Amos Dickerson, Ebenezer Wood, Levi Whitney, Mrs. Joseph Jewett, Betsey Dickerson, after-



wards the wife of Isaac Jackson, were prominent singers in the first meeting-house, and some of them are found in the choir at a later period. Jacob Kiblinger was a famous singer, but he generally worshipped with the Baptists and was not a constant member of the choir.

Although led by a choir, for many years the singing was mainly congregational, and on account of the small number of books in the possession of the worshippers the practice of reading or lining the hymns was continued about thirty years. After the hymn had been read by the minister one of the deacons would read one or two lines. When that passage had been sung in the animated manner of the time, and while the singers were regaining breath, the deacon read another line or couplet and by this alternating process the longest hymns were fully rendered. In 1788 the church voted that no hymn should be sung without reading if any deacon was present to read it, except the last hymn in the service, but the following year at the request of the town the practice was discontinued altogether.

At the time the congregation began to worship in the second meeting-house a bass viol was introduced, but there is no reference in the records to other instruments until several years later, but it is certain that from an early date the singers were accustomed to select a chorister and to accept the support of any musical instrument that was available. For these reasons very little mention of the conduct of church music is found in the records. For one hundred years an interest in the subject and a commendable pride in home talent has been manifested by the town, and later by the parish, by frequent and liberal appropriations "for the encouragement of singing," and schools of instruction under efficient teachers have been numerous.



More than any other, musical ability is a gift of inheritance. In every community can be found families of musicians. This faculty may present different phases in succeeding generations but the musical ability of the parents is ever renewed in their children. This town has counted among its residents many excellent musicians and many natives of the place have been famous, while others, more remotely associated, can trace their musical inheritance to an Ashburnham parentage. In the following paragraph it will be discovered that many of the prominent members of the choir through all these years were descendants from some of the earliest singers in this town. Catherine, wife of John Kiblinger the emigrant, is distinguished in tradition for qualities of voice and skill in music, and the choir has been indebted to her descendants through several generations. The musical talent of the Adams, Rice, Barrett and the Charles Stearns families has been conspicuous through succeeding generations. As the voice of the parents grew feeble in age or was silent in death, the unbroken song has been sustained in the tuneful notes of their children. Many of these have been prominent in the choir where their services have been appreciated.

Among the singers in the second meeting-house on the old common, whose voices are still heard in the traditions of the choir, were Colonel Charles Barrett, Benjamin Barrett, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Stearns, Mr. and Mrs. Reuben Townsend, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Hastings, the brothers John, James and Walter R. Adams, George Lawrence, Josiah White, Harvey M. Bancroft, Mrs. Benjamin Gibbs, a daughter of Reuben Rice, Mrs. James Russell, assisted by the violins of Colonel Charles Barrett and Jonas Rice, the clarionets of Walter R. Adams and Samuel Foster,



the bugle of James Barrett and the bassoon of James Adams.

Several of these continued with the choir in the new meeting-house in the village, and from time to time were reënforced by Amos Taylor, Joseph Kibling, Colonel Joseph P. Rice, Colonel Francis J. Barrett, Colonel George H. Barrett, who entered the choir at an early age, Harvey M. Bancroft, Stephen A. Miller, Mr. and Mrs. Josiah E. White, Mrs. Sally (Thurston) Phillips, Mrs. Shepherd, David and Harvey Laws, Dr. and Mrs. Miller, Mrs. Josephine (Stearns) Tenny, Julia and Caroline Barrett, Mrs. Rebecca (Stearns) Walker, whose cultured voice led the choir several years, and the viols and violins of Deacon J. A. Conn, Harvey M. Bancroft, George H. Lowe, Stephen A. Miller, Horace Samson, the flute of J. E. White and the clarionet skilfully played by Captain A. A. Walker. In this choir Mrs. Julia Houston West began her public singing and C. C. Stearns, when a lad, accurately played the bass viol. The present choir, under the efficient direction of Colonel George H. Barrett, with Miss Augusta Ames organist, is well sustained by the leading voices of Miss Lizzie F. Barrett, Mrs. Georgie S. (Whitney) Greenwood, Mrs. Theresa (Rockwood) Litch and Homer T. Rice.

In the early service of the Methodist church sacred song was the voluntary praise of the congregation, rather than the skilled performance of a choir. In this style of music any failure of culture was fully compensated by fervor and animation. Since the occupancy of the meeting-house in the central village a good choir has been quite generally sustained and very many acceptable singers and several cultured voices have participated in this feature of public worship. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Stearns, who had been teachers of music, were prominent in this choir many years and later



their daughter, Mrs. Walker, was leader of the choir and leading soprano thirteen years. The strong and not untuneful voice of Antipas Maynard is well remembered and his daughters have rendered efficient service. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Hastings, Sawyer Rice, Lewis Sabin, Nathaniel F. Cutter, Sarah A. Cutter and many others, are often named in the traditions of the Methodist choir. At the present time Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Eaton are leading singers and Miss Mabel W. Tenney is organist.



## CHAPTER XII.

### PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

HOME EDUCATION. — FIRST APPROPRIATION FOR SCHOOLS. — FIRST SCHOOL-HOUSES. — DISTRICTS. — EIGHT DISTRICTS DEFINED. — A NEW DISTRICT. — THE TENTH DISTRICT. — NEW BOUNDARIES. — THE ELEVENTH DISTRICT. — THE DISTRICT SYSTEM ABOLISHED. — SCHOOL-HOUSES. — TEXT-BOOKS. — TEACHERS. — APPROPRIATIONS. — SCHOOL LEGISLATION. — HIGH SCHOOLS. — PRUDENTIAL AFFAIRS. — SUPERVISION.

No sooner had a few families, at remote distances and connected by rude paths through the intervening wilderness, secured the stated ministrations of the gospel, than means were provided for the education of the young. During the early years of the settlement, in which there were no public schools, the young were not suffered to grow up in ignorance. The parents were generally people of intelligence and not a few of considerable culture. They personally attended to the education of their children and there were as many schools in the settlement as there were families. Whatever may have been the measure of instruction in the home circle the results are unmistakable. None grew up in ignorance, and the many evidences of a fair education, made known in the lives of those whose only schooling was at the fireside, are the substance of our knowledge of the instruction of that early period. A part of the children of the Winchester, Foster, Coolidge, Kibling, Whiteman and Coleman families were advanced youth when the first public school was established in this town; yet, compared with the standard of their



times, they were educated, intelligent men and women, and it is clearly evident that the education of the youth of that period was not neglected through a failure of public support. The date of the first entries found in the records on this subject is 1767. Compared with the schools of to-day it was a humble beginning: "Voted to Keep a School and voted Eight Pounds for y<sup>e</sup> school."

At a meeting assembled a few months later and before any of the appropriation had been expended under an article, "To see where y<sup>e</sup> Town will keep their School, whether in y<sup>e</sup> middle of y<sup>e</sup> Town or Divide it into Quarters or Pass any votes on s<sup>d</sup> article," it was "Voted y<sup>t</sup> y<sup>e</sup> School Should be a moveing School, voted to leave it to y<sup>e</sup> Select men to make y<sup>e</sup> Quarters where ye school Shall be Cept, voted it to bee a free School." The term quarter was here employed in the sense of district or division and this use of the word permitted the selectmen to divide the town into an accommodating number of quarters, which was frequently done, without defiance of mathematical terms. During the early existence of the schools the town was divided into three districts, a school being maintained at the centre of the town, another at the Dutch farms and the third in the south part of the town. In 1774, in accordance with the existing arrangement of the districts, the town voted to build three school-houses. This action was promptly reconsidered, and an order was adopted that the town be divided into five quarters and that five school-houses be erected at the expense of the town. At this point there is found no reference to any new districts, but in some way there were seven in the following year. For several years, commencing with 1780, there were ten districts; in 1786, there were nine; in 1794 the number of districts was reduced to eight; but in 1801 a new ninth district was established in the southeast part of the town,



including the estates of Joshua Billings, Reuben Billings, Reuben Rice, Jonathan Winchester, Thomas Gibson, Joseph Gibbs, Caleb Wilder, Jr., and Samuel Dunster.

Thus, at the close of the century, we find the town divided into nine districts, and in each, as will appear, there was a comfortable school-house. While the boundaries of these districts have been subject to frequent changes, and the tenth and eleventh districts have been created by a division of the seventh and first districts, the remaining numbers were bounded substantially as they exist at the present time. From the beginning changes in the boundaries of the districts and requests of individuals to be transferred to an adjacent district have been a prolific source of legislation. In 1805, the subject of a general revision was referred to a committee of one from each district who reported the following year "that it is their unanimous opinion that a general rearrangement throughout the town cannot be advisable, but some alterations, in the southern part of the town, may be attended with good effect." This action did not pacify the town, and many petitions were renewed. In May, 1808, the whole subject was referred to a committee, consisting of Dr. Abraham Lowe, Captain Caleb Wilder, Captain George R. Cushing, Lieutenant John Adams, Mr. Timothy Crehore, Mr. Lemuel Stimson, Captain John Willard, Mr. Caleb Ward and Mr. William Merriam. On the twenty-ninth of November following the committee made a report dividing the town into eight districts, as follows :

DISTRICT NUMBER ONE. — To consist of Rev. John Cushing, Moses Tottingham, Abraham Lowe, Horatio Hale, David Cushing, David Cushing, Jr., Joseph Jewett, Grover Scollay, Wm. J. Lawrence, Ephraim Cobleigh, Fitch Crosby, Hosea Stone, widow Nancy Stone, Joseph Miller, widow Brooks, Luther Brooks, Sewell Brooks, Phinehas Stimson, Cyrus Fairbanks, Jacob Fair-



banks, Oliver Samson, David Russell, Caleb Ward, Jr., Nathan Jones, Stephen Randall, Phinehas Randall, Jonas Randall, Joel Barrett, Oliver Marble, Oliver Marble, Jr., Thaddeus Brooks, Jonas Robbins, Shebuel Hobard, Deacon Jacob Harris, Ezekiel S. Metcalf (35).

DISTRICT NUMBER TWO. — Oliver Green, Jesse Ellis, Jonathan Brooks, John Winter, David Wallis, William Ward, Henry Hall, Lemuel Whitney, Nicholas Whiteman, John Hall, David Taylor, Nathan Taylor, George R. Cushing, Jacob Willard, Jacob Constantine, Wait Broughton (16).

DISTRICT NUMBER THREE. — Lieutenant John Adams, Walter R. Adams, James Adams, John Adams, Jr., Thomas Russell, Isaac Hill, Ebenezer Adams, Isaac Reed, William Gates, John Hadley's place, widow Ruth Conn, James Cowee, Jabez Marble, Jonas Rice, Peter Polley, Asa Woods, Asa Sawin, Joshua Billings, George Wilker, Josiah Fletcher (20).

DISTRICT NUMBER FOUR. — Reuben Rice, Jonathan Winchester, Joseph Gibbs, Thomas Gibson, William Merriam, Samuel Gates, Samuel Dunster, Nehemiah Maynard, Stephen Maynard, Thomas Hobart, Mrs. Sarah Earle, William Whitney, Samuel Whitney, Stephen Bemis, Deacon Sherebiah Hunt (15).

DISTRICT NUMBER FIVE. — Reuben Townsend, widow Conn, Caleb Wilder, Jr., Captain Silas Whitney's place, Samuel Clark, Henry Gates, Ebenezer Munroe, Samuel Phillips, John Gates, Jonathan Samson, Stephen Corey, Deacon Elisha White, John Willard, Joshua Smith, Grover Scollay, Joseph Burgess, Ebenezer Burgess, Simeon Brooks, John Corey, Joseph Stone, Ezra Stone, Elial Bacon, Jonas Reed, Daniel Knight, Jonathan Haven, John Haven, Nathaniel Adams, James Haynes, Phinehas Taylor, Hezekiah Corey (30).

DISTRICT NUMBER SIX. — Timothy Crehore, Benjamin Angier, Joseph Merriam, Moses Sanderson, Timothy Crehore, Jr., Frederick Crosby, Adam Stone, J. Hayden, William Holbrook, Jonah Rice, Nathaniel Foster, David Clark, William Harris (13).

DISTRICT NUMBER SEVEN. — Samuel Cotting, Ithamer Fairbanks, James Weston, Colonel Francis Lane, Caleb Ward, Ezra



Lawrence, Enos Jones, Joseph Fenno, Barnabas Baldwin, Abraham Cummings, Grant Houston, Moses Lawrence, Isaac Whitmore, Edmund Jones, Ebenezer B. Davis, widow Kezia Hobart, Captain Silas Willard (17).

DISTRICT NUMBER EIGHT. — Simon Willard, Amos Pierce, Daniel Benjamin, Daniel Benjamin, Jr., Nathan Jones' place, William Stearns, Jesse Stearns, Joshua Barton, James Stearns' place, Joseph Steele, Daniel McIntire, Ezra Hastings, Lemuel Stinson, Benjamin Lane, Josiah Lane, Captain Charles Hastings, Henry Willard (17).

At a previous meeting the same year, on the petition of several families residing in the vicinity of Rice pond, a new district had been created for their accommodation. Under the arrangement embraced in the report of the committee these families were restored to the first district and their new district was annulled as soon as organized. Immediately they renewed their solicitations for an independent district and were again successful. In May, 1810, after several hearings the town "Voted to grant the request of Jacob Harris and others, which is to set off the following persons as a school district by themselves, viz. : Jacob Harris, Shebuel Hobart, Oliver Marble, Ezekiel S. Metcalf, Charles Hastings, Joel Barrett, Thaddeus Brooks, John Winter, Jonas Randall, Josiah Lane, Oliver Marble, Jr., and Jonas Robbins."

These radical changes in the district organizations did not restore tranquillity. The continued petitions of individuals to be annexed to a contiguous district were sometimes granted but more generally denied. After several refusals the inhabitants of Lane Village were permitted to organize the tenth district, but the boundaries were not defined by the town until 1829. The vote of the town was as follows: "That Samuel Foster, Ezekiel Metcalf, Francis Lane, Henry Kibling, Henry Kibling, Jr., David Hadley, Caleb Ward,



John Kibling, Francis Kibling, Richard W. Houghton, Elias Lane, Alvin Ward, Henry Gipson, Moses Lawrence, Ebenezer B. Davis, Charles Davis, John C. Davis, Joseph Davis and Humphrey Harris, together with their estates and all the non-resident lands lying within the limits (together with Joel Foster and his estate if he wishes), shall constitute school district Number Ten in the town of Ashburnham."

Again, in 1832 the boundaries of all the districts were definitely established and several changes were made. Many now living were attending school when this order of the town was executed. Those whose former relations were ruthlessly severed, who were thus compelled to attend school in new places, who trod no more the old familiar paths to the school-house, nor met the familiar faces of their former playmates, will even now recall the proceeding with vivid recollection.

A committee, consisting of George G. Parker, John Hall, Asa Woods, Elijah Brooks, Elisha White, Timothy Crehore, Jr., Enoch Whitmore, Jonas Willard, Charles Hastings, Elias Lane, — one from each district, — made the following recommendation which was adopted :

Your committee, appointed at the last March meeting to determine and define the limits of the several school districts, having attended to that duty, would respectfully recommend that the several territories as hereafter bounded and described, with the inhabitants at any time residing thereon, should constitute different districts in this town, to wit :

DISTRICT NUMBER ONE. — Beginning at the southeasterly corner of William Whitney's farm and running northerly to the central point in the road between Reuben Townsend, Jr., and Mrs. Hunt ; thence northerly so as to cross the county road leading through the village at the north end of Dr. Pierce's east wall near Thomas Hobart's land ; thence northerly to the junction of the Ashby road and the road leading to Emery Fairbanks' ; thence



northwesterly to a stake and stones on the west side of New Ipswich road north of Corey & Ross' mill; thence in the same direction to a stake and stones on the west side of the road between Jonas Robbins' and the said bank; thence westerly to the south end of Meeting-house pond; thence to the centre of the road fifty rods south of Ezekiel Metcalf; thence northerly in the [line] of said road five rods north of Joel Foster's; thence westerly so as to meet the county road at the east side of the French farm; thence southeasterly to the junction of the roads leading by Oliver Samson's and Josiah Eaton's; thence to a stake and stones on the north side of the road between Samuel Whitney's and Stephen Corey's at the division line between their farms; thence southeasterly so as to cross the road leading by Joseph Harris' at the east end of his south wall near Captain Willard's land; thence north of Mr. Barrett's to the southwest corner of William Whitney's farm at the line of the town of Westminster; thence on said town line to the bounds first mentioned.

DISTRICT NUMBER TWO. — Beginning at Wilker's new road at the line of the town of Ashby; thence running northerly on said Ashby line to the northwest corner of Elnathan Lawrence's farm; thence southerly to the north end of Brooks' pond; thence to the junction of the roads leading by Salmon Rice's and Joseph Dudley's; thence southerly to the east side of Mount Hunger; thence on District Number Three to the bounds first mentioned.

DISTRICT NUMBER THREE. — Beginning at the junction of the Ashby road and the road leading by Emery Fairbanks'; thence easterly to a pair of bars across a pathway leading to Nathaniel Cutter's; thence easterly to the southeast corner of Joshua Billings' farm; thence north on the line of the town of Ashby to Wilker's new road; thence westerly to the side of Mount Hunger; thence westerly to the northwest corner of Stephen Lane's pasture; thence southerly to the bounds first mentioned.

DISTRICT NUMBER FOUR. — Beginning at the southeast corner of William Whitney's farm; thence on District Number One to the central point in the road between Reuben Townsend, Jr., and Mrs. Hunt's; thence northerly crossing the county road at the



north end of Dr. Pierce's east wall to the junction of the Ashby road and the road leading to Emery Fairbanks'; thence easterly on District Number Three to a pair of bars across a passway leading to Nathaniel Cutter's; thence easterly to the southeast corner of Joshua Billings' farm; thence southerly and westerly on the line of the towns of Ashby, Fitchburg and Westminster to the bounds first mentioned.

DISTRICT NUMBER FIVE. — Beginning at the southwesterly corner of William Whitney's farm; thence northwesterly on the north side of William Barrell's and on District Number One to the junction of the roads leading by Oliver Samson's and Josiah Eaton's; thence westerly so as to cross the turnpike leading to P. R. Merriam's at Sanderson's corner; thence to the line of Gardner on the north side of Hezekiah Corey's farm; thence southerly and easterly on the town line of said Gardner and Westminster to the bounds first mentioned.

DISTRICT NUMBER SIX. — Beginning at the line of the town of Gardner on the north side of Hezekiah Corey's farm; thence easterly on District Number Five to Sanderson's corner; thence on Districts Number Five and Number One to the county road leading from Ashburnham to Winchendon at the east side of the French farm, so-called; thence to the northeasterly corner of James Laws' land; thence westerly to the line of the town of Winchendon at the northwesterly corner of William Harris' farm; thence on the town line of said Winchendon and Gardner to the bounds first mentioned.

DISTRICT NUMBER SEVEN. — Beginning at the line of the town of Winchendon at the northwest corner of William Harris' farm; thence easterly on District Number Six to the northeast corner of James Laws' land; thence easterly to the southwest corner of Asa Tottingham's land; thence easterly to the southeast corner of William Houghton's land; thence northerly to the northeast corner of said Houghton's land; thence westerly to the southeast corner of Silas Willard's land; thence north on Silas Willard, George Wood, Daniel Jones and Rial Cummings to the line of the State of New Hampshire; thence westerly on said State line to



the northwest corner of Ashburnham; thence southerly on the line of the town of Winchendon to the bounds first mentioned.

DISTRICT NUMBER EIGHT. — Beginning at the northwest corner of Captain T. Stearns' farm at the line of New Hampshire; thence westerly on Rial Cummings, Daniel Jones, George Wood and Silas Willard to the southeast corner of Silas Willard's farm; thence on District Number Seven to the southeast corner of William Houghton's land; thence southeasterly to the northwest corner of Lewis Willard's farm; thence to the southeast corner of said Lewis Willard's farm; thence easterly to land of Charles Hastings; thence to the northwest corner of said Hastings' land; thence southeasterly to land of Oliver Marble or Oliver Green; thence easterly to land of Jesse Ellis; thence north to the State line at land of Elnathan Lawrence; thence on said State line to the bounds first mentioned.

DISTRICT NUMBER NINE. — Beginning at the junction of the Ashby road and the road leading to Emery Fairbanks'; thence westerly on District Number One to the south end of Meeting-house pond; thence northerly on District Number Ten to John Lane's land; thence easterly to Jesse Ellis' land; thence southerly to the north end of Brooks' pond; thence on District Number Two to the east side of Mount Hunger; thence westerly to the northwest corner of Stephen Lane's pasture; thence on District Number Three to the bounds first mentioned.

DISTRICT NUMBER TEN. — Beginning in the centre of the road five rods north of Joel Foster's; thence westerly to the south-westerly corner of Captain Francis Lane's farm; thence to the northwest corner of Caleb Ward's land; thence easterly and northerly on the pond to the northwest corner of Jacob Ward's farm; thence easterly to the northwest corner of Lewis Willard's farm; from thence to the southeast corner of said Lewis Willard's farm; thence south to the Meeting-house pond; thence south on the west side of said pond to the south end; thence westerly and northerly on District Number One to the bounds first mentioned.

Few changes in the boundaries of these districts are noted until 1850, when, by the division of the first district, the



eleventh was organized. This measure was warmly debated and was carried by a small majority and at best it must be regarded as a measure of doubtful expediency.

Under the provisions of the recent school laws of the State, with which all are presumed to be familiar, several attempts to vacate the district system were defeated by a majority of the town. In the mean time the measure was fully debated and was met with accumulating support. In 1878 the school district system was abolished and the appraisal of the houses and other school property was referred to the selectmen. Since then the employment of the teachers and the prudential affairs of the schools have devolved upon the committee of supervision. For half a century, under the school code of 1827, the districts were organized corporations, assuming and exercising the control of their prudential affairs. Previous to that date the town, in the choice of the prudential and superintending committees and in building school-houses, maintained a control over the schools which was renewed in 1878 when the district system was abolished. In the early history of the schools the town chose two committees instead of one, yet in theory, and so far as the source of authority is concerned, the ancient and the modern systems, separated by fifty years, are practically the same.

Very little information of the first school-houses is found in the records, and in some instances the action of the town appears contradictory. In 1782 it was ordered "that each school quarter build school-houses by themselves if they are willing to have houses and that each quarter assess themselves for that purpose." Within three months from the foregoing vote the town "granted one hundred and twenty pounds to be laid out in building school-houses and voted that each quarter draw their proportion of it," and at the same meeting permission was granted to build a school-house



on the common. In 1786 sixty pounds and in 1793 seventy-five pounds was "granted to finish the school-houses." In 1799 the town appropriated seventy-five dollars "towards building a school-house in Lieut. John Adams' ward in room of the one lately burned." Three years later it was voted to give Joseph Gibbs' school district fifty dollars towards building a school-house. This vote is connected with the reorganization of a ninth district which subsequently became known as the fourth district. At this date the districts were not numbered and were distinguished by the name of some prominent citizen. In 1809, when many of the school-houses were found too small or in need of repair, the town asserted its independence of continued responsibility in the premises in a declaration that "each school district should build its own school-house."

It is apparent from the records and confirmed by tradition that a school-house was built on the northwest part of the common at the close of the Revolution. In 1809 a new house was built on the common north of land of Moses Tottingham and east of the highway leading south from the old meeting-house. It was removed to the village in 1818. The site then selected has been occupied to the present time. At an early date there was a school-house at the foot of the Charles Lawrence hill, but changes in the boundaries of the districts joined the families in that vicinity to the second and the eighth districts. A school-house, which was burned in 1810, stood many years on the ledges, east of the residence of Warren E. Marble and not far from the house of Nathan and Oliver Taylor, and a second building was erected on the same site. This was removed sixty or more years ago and stood several years across the road from its present location. The flowage of the meadow caused the last removal. It has been repaired frequently and is yet a comfortable school-



house. In the third district, after the first house was burned another was built near the residence of Newell Marble which was succeeded by a brick house which proved too heavy for the moist ground on which it stood, and was replaced by the present frame building about forty years ago.

An early house in the fourth district, built above eighty years ago, stood in the mill-yard of Cyrus A. Jefts. The present house was built in 1838. A few years before the close of the past century, a school-house was erected about two hundred yards north of the residence of Benjamin E. Wetherbee. The next house in this vicinity was located about as far west of the residence of Mr. Wetherbee and was burned almost forty years ago. In 1848 a two-story brick house was built on the present site. This house was burned in 1865. The new house, commodious and substantial, was built in 1867. Another ancient school-house was erected on the old road to Winchendon and near the Frederick Crosby place. Many years ago it was removed or a new one built near the Astor House. Later the centre of population was in Burrageville where rooms were rented for the accommodation of the school. In 1882 the present house was built. A portion of Number Seven has formed a part of several geographical districts. Tradition stoutly affirms that in very early times, for the accommodation of a large section of the town, there was a school-house west of the saw-mill of Isaac D. Ward and on an old road leading from and north of the meeting-house in North Ashburnham. The tradition is probably in accordance with the fact and it is also certain that one hundred years ago a house was built on a road long since discontinued, and about eighty yards north of the residence of Nathaniel R. Butler. The house was burned in 1812. Immediately another was built north of the village of North Ashburnham at the junction of the Rindge road



and a road now discontinued. In response to changes made in the boundaries of the district the house was removed to a point on the road leading from the Deacon Jones' place to the present site. The house near the residence of Henry Tuckerman was built in 1850, and is situated two miles from the centre of the original district. The first school-house in the eighth district, built at an early date, was located on the Stearns road, a short distance from the present house. It was burned in 1814 and its successor built the following year. The school-house in the ninth district was so thoroughly constructed at the organization of the district that attentive repairs have continued its preservation. The school-house provided in Lane Village at the organization of the district was continued until 1852 when the present substantial house was erected.

The commencement of the present century was the beginning of a new era in the cause of popular education. The efforts of the past had taken root for a more vigorous growth, and many happy changes occurred within a few years. In most cases, to learn to read, write and spell, with some knowledge of the rules of arithmetic, was all that had been attempted. The text-books in use previous to 1800 were not numerous, and of a most primitive character. Dilworth's and Perry's Spelling-Book, and Pike's Arithmetic would cut a sorry figure in the school-room at the present time. Late in the past century, Webster's Reader found its way into the school-room, as well as a small abridgment of Morse's Geography, which gave the briefest description of the earth's surface, and contained many startling facts. Alexander's Grammar was in the hands of only the most advanced and ambitious pupils. In any mention of the books of the period, the New England Primer must not be omitted. This volume of diminutive size, filled with wholesome truths,



was found at every fireside, and was received in the school-room as a reading-book and safe counsellor. Every Saturday, and sometimes more frequently, the entire school was required to "say the catechism," as found in this little volume. These exercises, and the truths inculcated, are not forgotten by the aged among us, but are shining brightly in their waning years. To them education, in an intellectual sense, was simply the measure of mental force, furnishing facilities to action, while these moral instructions were seized upon to direct and be the guiding principle of their lives.

From an early date the most successful teachers in the public schools have been natives and residents of this town. Within the limits of this chapter it would be impossible to name even those who secured an enduring reputation in the traditions of the town. As early as 1790, Hon. Samuel Appleton, then of New Ipswich, was an instructor one term at least in the first humble school-house on the old common. Captain Caleb Wilder, portly in form, genial in manner, yet firm in discipline, was a successful teacher many years. Master Jesse Stearns, the physical counterpart of Mr. Wilder, upright in bearing and incisive in manner, was employed in several districts. His fame as a teacher is familiar to the traditions of several towns in this vicinity. These worthies were succeeded by Hosea Green, Eleazer Flint of Winchendon, Stephen Wyman of Ashby, Artemas Longley, Ebenezer Frost, Hon. William B. Washburn, Hon. Amasa Norcross and many natives of Ashburnham whose distinguished labor will be noticed in the family registers.

It has been stated that the first appropriation made for schools in 1767 was eight pounds. With the exception of the years 1768, 1769 and 1776, in which no appropriation was made for this purpose, the town raised twelve pounds annually until and including 1777. In 1778, £40; 1779,



£200; 1780, £1000; 1781, £4000 were respectively voted, but on account of the rapid depreciation of the currency during the Revolution, the schools did not receive any substantial benefit over the former years. For several years after the Revolution £50 was annually raised and then the amount was increased from year to year until in the year 1800, \$300 was appropriated, and the gradual increase to the present time is briefly represented in the sums raised through the decades of the present century: 1810, \$400; 1820, \$500; 1830, \$500; 1840, \$900; 1850, \$1400; 1860, \$1700; 1870, \$3000; 1880, \$2800. From 1872 to 1875, \$3500, and from 1880 to 1884, \$3000 has been appropriated for the schools of the town.

From the first the amount of school money was determined by the town, but the vote was only the united voice of the districts. The tax was assessed and collected by the officers of the town because they could most readily and accurately proportion the amount each person should pay, but the school money was received and expended by the agents of the districts. Beyond the slender assistance of the towns, the public schools, in their infancy, were not the growth of public support nor the creation of State legislation, but were spontaneous in the several communities to meet the demands of each. Our common school system has clearly originated with the people. The perfection of our code of school laws rests in the fact that it is not creative but that it has rather seized and solidified the most advanced methods and the fullest measure of public sentiment. The law has seldom introduced new forms and unfamiliar methods, but has been content in the encouragement and support of those at once familiar and approved by the people. The schools have continually been in advance of the statutes.



The settlers in the towns in this vicinity divided themselves into communities of convenient proportions, which existed upon the slender authority of the town for sixty years before the law vested these school districts with corporate power. The towns, in behalf of the districts, continued to raise money for the establishment and maintenance of schools a long time before there was any statute compelling an appropriation which had been uniformly and cheerfully made. The town, and later the several districts, built school-houses and subsequently the law gave them permission to continue a laudable practice. The people in the capacity of a town chose "committees to visit and inspect the schools" many years before the statutes made mention of a superintending school committee. True, law has given uniformity and perfection to our school system, but the whole of it has sprung from and has first been tested and approved by the people.

Various methods for the division of the school money among the districts have been employed. A few years each district has received an equal share of the annual appropriation without regard to the tax paid by the district or the number of scholars attending school. This system was succeeded by a division according to the number of scholars and also on the basis of the wealth or the tax paid by each district. After a trial of one and then another of these antagonistic systems for several years, a compromise was adopted which led to an absolute division of the greater part and a discretionary division of the remainder of the school appropriation.

From 1868 to 1875 the town maintained a high school one or more terms each year with a reasonable measure of success. The schools were assembled in the basement of the armory and in the school-houses in the first and eleventh



districts. The teachers were Samuel J. Bullock, Melvin O. Adams, Charles E. Woodward, Fred W. Russell, Francis A. Whitney, Martin H. Fiske, F. T. Beede, Mary A. Sawyer and E. A. Hartwell.

Commencing with the inauguration of Cushing Academy in 1875, the youth of this town have enjoyed the benefit of a permanent high school. For several years the town paid one thousand dollars and at present is paying seven hundred dollars annually to the academy for the maintenance of a high school department without tuition from resident pupils.

The prudential affairs of the districts, including the employment of the teachers, were conducted by the selectmen until 1778. At this date the town proceeded to choose a prudential committee, or agent, for each district and continued to exercise this authority for fifty years. Not until 1828 were there any district organizations. The laws of 1827 introduced many substantial improvements. By it the districts were permitted to assume the control of their local affairs, and towns were required to choose annually a committee of supervision. Previous to this date the choice of a superintending committee was optional with the towns. Commencing at an early date three or more persons, styled "a committee to visit the schools," were chosen nearly every year, but under the operation of the new law the committee of supervision was vested with increased authority and dignity.

The first committee "to view" the schools was chosen in 1793. It included the minister, the selectmen and Joshua Smith, Stephen Randall, John Adams, Jacob Willard and Enos Jones. In the years immediately following, to Joseph Jewett, William Pollard, John Whiteman, Ezra Dana, William Stearns, Elisha White, Dr. Abraham Lowe, Thomas Adams, Timothy Crehore, Isaac Whitmore, Francis



Lane, Joshua Townsend, Amos Wetherbee and Samuel Wilder was committed the supervision of the schools.

During the first decade of the present century there is no record of the election of a superintending committee. Commencing in 1811, with the exception of four years, from three to nine persons have been annually elected; introducing new names each year the roll of the committee is the register of a legion. The names of those who have served two or more years, the date of their first election and the term of service are appended: Rev. John Cushing, 1811 (4); Caleb Wilder, 1811 (7); Jesse Stearns, 1811 (5); Ivers Jewett, 1811 (6); Dr. Abraham Lowe, 1811 (3); Jacob Harris, 1812 (2); George R. Cushing, 1813 (9); Caleb Ward, 1815 (3); Jacob Harris, Jr., 1816 (2); Dr. Abraham T. Lowe, 1818 (2); Jonas Willard, 1818 (2); Charles Stearns, 1820 (3); Rev. George Perkins, 1826 (4); Hosea Green, 1826 (2); Thomas Bennett, 1826 (2); Colonel Enoch Whitmore, 1826 (3); John C. Glazier, 1828 (3); Gilman Jones, 1829 (2); Ebenezer Frost, 1829 (12); Rev. George Goodyear, 1833 (4); George G. Parker, 1833 (2); Rev. John W. Case, 1835 (2); Dr. Nathaniel Pierce, 1835 (3); Dr. William P. Stone, 1838 (3); Jerome W. Foster, 1839 (8); John A. Conn, 1841 (10); Elliot Moore, 1841 (3); William P. Ellis, 1845 (3); Rev. Elnathan Davis, 1847 (3); Dr. Alfred Miller, 1848 (10); Rev. Josiah D. Crosby, 1850 (11); Francis A. Whitney, 1850 (16); Edward S. Flint, 1855 (3); Levi W. Russell, 1856 (2); Hosea F. Lane, 1857 (3); Charles W. Burrage, 1857 (3); Albert H. Andrews, 1858 (4); Dr. L. L. Whitmore, 1860 (4); Henry Tuckerman, 1860 (3); John W. Fay, 1860 (2); Asher Moore, 1860 (4); Ohio Whitney, Jr., 1861 (3); Samuel Howard, 1862 (3); Dr. Theron Temple, 1864 (3); Charles E. Woodward, 1865 (11); Dr. Harvey D.



Jillson, 1867 (3); Rev. Daniel Wight, 1870 (3); Nathan Eaton, 1870 (8); Wilbur F. Whitney, 1870 (10); Rev. Leonard S. Parker, 1872 (5); Marshall Wetherbee, 1873 (3); Charles F. Rockwood, 1876 (6); Prof. James E. Vose, 1878 (3); Fred D. Lane, 1880 (5); Mrs. Mary S. Barrett, 1880 (3).



## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE CUSHING ACADEMY.

INCIDENTAL FEATURES OF THE ENDOWMENT. — THE WILL OF THOMAS PARKMAN CUSHING. — THE TRUSTEES. — PROGRESS OF EVENTS. — WINCHESTER SQUARE. — THE EDIFICE. — DEDICATION. — THE SCHOOL FUND. — JEWETT HALL. — THE CROSBY SCHOLARSHIP. — LIBRARY AND APPARATUS. — PROFESSOR PIERCE. — PROFESSOR VOSE. — BOARD OF TRUSTEES, PAST AND PRESENT.

THE causes, which led to the endowment of Cushing Academy and its establishment in Ashburnham, are not adventitious. In the mission of the school the ministry of the father is renewed in the munificence of the son. Illogical and ungenerous would be the thought that by a single act of beneficence on the part of Thomas Parkman Cushing the academy bearing his name was founded. An impulse of princely benevolence without the means to sustain it, or the wisdom to direct its course, is unavailing. The prerequisites to the endowment of Cushing Academy were a life of toil, supported by habits of frugality, and the wisdom displayed, in the conditions of the bequest, was the fruitful thought of a sagacious mind. When the youth left the parental roof engaging at an early age in the activities of life, the seminary was deferred only by the measure of a lifetime, and as often as his thought returned to the place of his nativity and the familiar scenes of his childhood, its location in Ashburnham was assured.



The events of the past, the utility of the present and the possibilities of the future can be most clearly presented in an unpretentious narrative of what has been done and what is contemplated by the trustees who have faithfully and successfully executed the express desire and have created in substantial form the image of the matured thought of Thomas Parkman Cushing. With meteoric splendor, the Cushing Academy did not spring into existence. Like the sturdy oak its growth has been slow and solidified. Its character and features, cemented and hardened by the lapse of years, are strong and enduring. The visible origin of the institution is the will and testament of Mr. Cushing, dated July 30, 1850. In its provisions it is a most happy alliance of wisdom and philanthropy, of liberality and prudence. There is no shadow of an impulse. It is the language and it carries the impress of a conclusion. It is apparent that every clause of this beneficent document was formulated and clear in the mind of its author before it was written. Nor need we invoke the license of imagination to presume that on some of the hills in Ashburnham he was accustomed to behold in the clear lines of reality the completed edifice on which the thought of his mind was so vividly inclined; that he beheld the established seats of learning shedding their beneficent rays of light and knowledge over a wide expanse of country, and that with his mind thus allied to the future, his appeal for the coöperation of others was the prayer of an earnest purpose that these influences should not fade with the lapse of years.

The language of the testator in the eighteenth item of his will is evidence that his plans were fully matured and "that he was earnest upon the subject of education as the saving grace of the republic."



And, whereas, it is my opinion that the stability of our Laws, and the safety of our Government, the right direction of our Republican Institutions, the preservation of virtue, and of good morals: and, in short, the well-being and happiness of society, depend in a great degree upon the general diffusion of practical and useful knowledge among the people, I am particularly desirous of using a portion of the estate with which God has blessed me, for the promotion of so important an object as that of improving the education, and thus of strengthening and enlarging the minds of the rising and of future generations. Hoping that others having similar views and opinions, will hereafter coöperate with me towards effecting the same great and desirable end: my Will, therefore, further is, That two schools or seminaries of learning, shall be established and forever continued in my native town of Ashburnham, in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; entirely distinct, and separated from each other by a distance of at least a quarter of a mile — the one for males of over ten years of age, and the other for females of over ten years of age. And for the foundation and endowment of these schools, I give to the Executors hereinafter named, and to their successors forever, in trust only, as follows.

Following with unfailing precision of statement and having appealed to the coöperative philanthropy of others, the donor enumerates several specific bequests "for improving the education and thus strengthening and enlarging the minds of the rising and of future generations." In regard to the magnitude of the bequest it is sufficient in this connection to state that in round numbers ninety-six thousand dollars was placed to the credit of the Cushing Academy immediately after its organization under the charter of 1865. The founder of our academy did not fail to provide for the future. With implicit confidence in "the judgment and discretion of the trustees" and in "the wisdom and foresight of the Legislature" his advisory wishes are clearly set forth.



And, in order to render the seminaries of learning herein established more efficient and extensively useful by an enlarged foundation, it is my further Will that the Trustees hereinafter named, shall diligently and promptly invest the several sums herein given to them, in trust, as they may be realized, for the foundation of said seminaries in such funds and securities as they in their discretion shall think best, and reinvest the income of the same during the period of ten years after my decease. When that period shall have elapsed, my further Will is, that the Trustees, hereinafter named, shall apply for, and obtain from the Legislature of this Commonwealth, a suitable Act of Incorporation or Charter, under which all the business and affairs of the schools herein founded may be conducted forever. The details of the Act, such as the number of Trustees under it, how they shall be appointed or elected, so as to insure as far as possible in perpetuity, a succession of honest, honorable, judicious and intelligent men; the guards to be adopted to prevent the waste or loss of the property belonging to the institution, etc., etc., I leave to the good judgment and discretion of the Trustees hereinafter named, and to the wisdom and foresight of the Legislature.

The trustees selected by the testator were Rev. Dr. Francis Wayland, a brother of his wife; Hon. Heman Lincoln, who married his sister; William D. Sohier, Esq., for many years his legal adviser; and Hon. Charles G. Loring. Mr. Sohier resigning, the appointment of the remaining gentlemen was approved and the will confirmed by the Probate Court December 26, 1854. The immediate control of the fund was committed by his associates to Mr. Loring. In accordance with the express desire of Mr. Cushing, ten years having elapsed, an act of incorporation was secured in 1865, and the trustees of the will were succeeded by a board of trust created by the charter.

The trustees, thirteen in number, with power to fill vacancies were as follows: Rev. Dr. Francis Wayland of



Providence, R. I. ; Hon. Alexander H. Bullock of Worcester ; Rev. Josiah D. Crosby ; Rev. Asa Rand ; Hon. Ohio Whitney, Jr. ; Jerome W. Foster, Esq., and George C. Winchester of Ashburnham ; Dr. Abraham T. Lowe of Boston ; Ebenezer Torrey, Esq., Hon. Alvah Crocker and Hon. Amasa Norcross of Fitchburg ; Rev. Abijah P. Marvin and Isaac M. Murdock of Winchendon. At the organization of the board, September 6, 1865, Rev. Dr. Wayland was chosen president, Mr. Torrey treasurer and Rev. Mr. Crosby secretary. Upon the death of Rev. Dr. Wayland, he was succeeded by Governor Bullock July 10, 1867. As none of the original fund could be used for building purposes, the board of trust early decided to build whenever the accumulations would be found sufficient. Under the sagacious management of Mr. Loring and his able successor, Mr. Torrey, the fund accumulated beyond the most sanguine expectations.

In the mean time the trustees clearly perceived that the school could be organized earlier, by several years, if only one edifice was erected. After mature deliberation, and mindful of the provision of the testator that while there was to be only one institution but accommodated in two school buildings, separated from each other by a distance at least of a quarter of a mile, they obtained the unqualified consent of the heirs and of the executors of the will to a modification of the plan of the founder in a single provision. The separate education of the sexes in schools and seminaries was more warmly advocated at the time the bequest was made than in later years. The tendency of public sentiment which probably influenced Mr. Cushing with equal force appealed in another direction to the board of trust.

In 1873 the accumulation of the fund was found sufficient to meet the expense of a suitable school edifice, and while



the location of the building was under consideration, the question was happily solved by the liberality of George C. Winchester who presented the corporation the site of the institution with ample grounds for the accommodation of the school which, in appreciative recognition of the donor, has received the name of "Winchester Square."

The academy and the square having other names would be held in less esteem. The park and the building are a memorial of the first and the second ministers of Ashburnham. The analogy is complete. Rev. Jonathan Winchester laid the foundations of a church and defined a field of labor. Rev. John Cushing builded in fair proportions on a site selected and a structure begun. These venerable names, living in the memories and history of the town, are together perpetuated through the thoughtful tributes of their descendants.

While under the general control of the board of trustees, the construction of the school edifice was referred to George C. Winchester, Ebenezer Torrey and Jerome W. Foster. In 1871 Ohio Whitney, who was the efficient superintendent of construction, was chosen to fill a vacancy caused by the death of Mr. Foster. The entire cost of the building and the furniture was \$92,611.75.

The material of the building, one hundred and thirty-two feet in length and fifty-two feet in width, is granite and brick. Above a light and commodious basement of granite are two spacious stories of brick with granite trimmings, surmounted by a Mansard roof which encloses a principal hall extending the length and breadth of the building. There are projecting turrets at the corners and a lofty central tower which contains a heavy bell and an expensive clock. In symmetry of outline, in elegance and thoroughness of construction and in the convenience of all its appoint-



ments, the edifice of the Cushing Academy is equalled by none in this vicinity. Facing the rising sun, and overlooking the village and the spreading valley below, it occupies a commanding site and will long remain a conspicuous figure in the landscape and in the continued annals of the town. The building was mainly completed during the year 1874. It was substantially furnished the following season and dedicated September 7, 1875. Addresses were delivered by Governor Bullock, president, and by Rev. Mr. Crosby, Rev. Mr. Marvin, Hon. Amasa Norcross and Professors Hubbard and Thompson of the board of trust. A liberal course of study had been arranged and the school was opened the following day.

The accumulating Cushing fund, after meeting the cost of construction of the school edifice, was found in November, 1876, to be \$120,542.34, and since that date the fund remains unimpaired, the income only being used for the maintenance of the school.

The spacious dwelling, appropriately named Jewett Hall, and now employed in the accommodation of instructors and pupils connected with the school, was presented to the corporation by Charles Hastings, and the Crosby house on Central street was donated by Rev. Josiah D. Crosby to found, in memory of his wife, the Elvira W. Crosby scholarship.

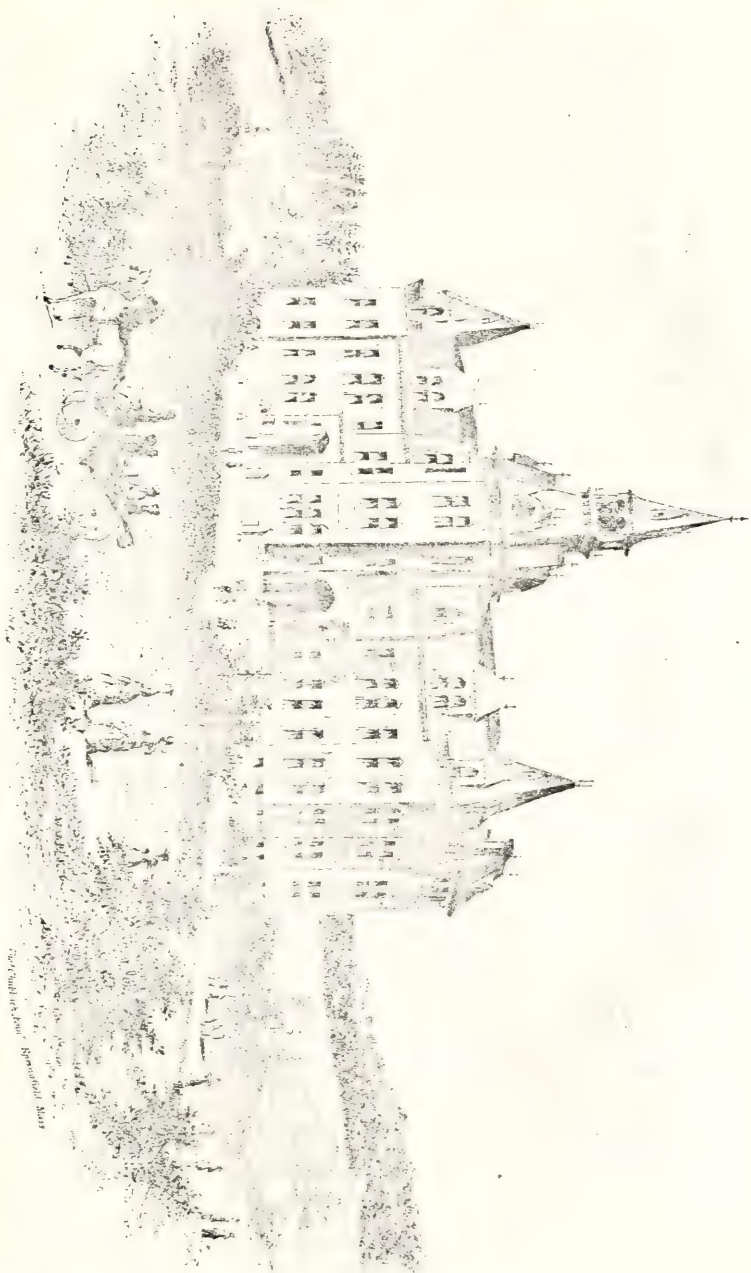
A library of nearly two thousand volumes, including generous donations from Dr. A. T. Lowe of Boston and from several residents of this town, has been collected and will become of inestimable service to the school. The apparatus for scientific illustration and experiment is annually increasing. Prominent in this department is a valuable telescope, presented by J. H. Fairbanks of Fitchburg.

The mission of Cushing Academy is scarce begun. Its brief history, if conspicuous and honorable, fades in the



CUSHING ACADEMY, ASHBURNHAM, MASS.

View from the Pond  
Springfield, Mass.





light and warmth of its hopes and its aspirations. These pages are annals of the past. The face of this youthful, vigorous institution is turned the other way. Situated in a broad field, with a rapidly increasing patronage, and bearing the confidence of the public, it enters upon its second decade with hope and courage.

The first principal of Cushing Academy was Edwin Pierce, A. M., who continued in charge four years, and whose name is honorably associated with the initial history of the institution. The excellent reputation of Professor Pierce as a scholar and an able instructor led the board of trustees to solicit his services and to his care they confided the school with unlimited confidence. In character, in purity of motives and in faithful, earnest endeavors to carry the school through the exacting ordeal of its inauguration, the confidence of the trustees was not misplaced. In the progress of his labors in this institution it gradually became apparent to Professor Pierce and to the board of trustees that they were not in full sympathy in regard to discipline and that there was a failure of coöperation on the part of all the friends of the academy. With the universal confidence and respect of the community, Mr. Pierce retired from labors auspiciously begun in June, 1879. From the first he was recognized as a cultured gentleman and in all his relations with the school and with the people he was frank, sincere and honorable.

Edwin Pierce, son of Dana and Diadema (Paul) Pierce, was born at Barnard, Vermont, June 25, 1826. He pursued a preparatory course of study at Woodstock, Vermont, and at Kimball Union Academy, Meriden, New Hampshire, and was graduated at Dartmouth College 1852. The succeeding four years he was instructor of Latin and Greek at Seneca Collegiate Institute, Ovid, New York. From 1856



to 1863 he was professor of Latin and Greek at Yellow Spring College, Iowa; his connection with that institution was severed by its decline at the outbreak of the Rebellion. During the succeeding eight years he successfully taught a private school in Jersey City, New Jersey, and later he taught the classics in the High School of Cleveland, Ohio, until he became connected with Cushing Academy. He now resides at West Newton, Massachusetts.

Professor Pierce was succeeded by Professor Vose who has been a member of the faculty since the opening of the academy. During the past six years he has continued the efficient principal of the school and his successful administration has been a continued season of prosperity. His service to the school and to the cause of education cannot be estimated until the remaining chapters are added and his labor is completed.

Prof. James E. Vose, son of Edward L. and Aurelia (Wilson) Vose of Antrim, New Hampshire, was born July 18, 1836. His life has been devoted to educational pursuits. He has had charge of several institutions of learning and was principal of Francestown (New Hampshire) Academy two years immediately preceding his removal to this town. He is the author of an English Grammar, and in 1877 he delivered the Centennial Address at Antrim which is published in the History of that town.

Of the persons who constituted the original board of trust only four now remain. The term of service and the date of appointment of the trustees are briefly stated:

Francis Wayland,	1865, died 1867.
Alexander H. Bullock,	1865, resigned 1876. .
Josiah D. Crosby,	1865.
Asa Rand,	1865, died 1871.
Ohio Whitney, Jr.,	1865, died 1879.



Jerome W. Foster,	1865, died 1871.
George C. Winchester,	1865, resigned 1882.
Abraham T. Lowe,	1865.
Ebenezer Torrey,	1865.
Alvah Crocker,	1865, died 1874.
Amasa Norcross,	1865.
Abijah P. Marvin,	1865, resigned 1880.
Isaac M. Murdock,	1865, died 1875.
George H. Barrett,	1873.
Leonard S. Parker,	1874.
Eli A. Hubbard,	1874, resigned 1879.
Charles O. Thompson,	1875, resigned 1882.
B. K. Pierce,	1879.
George F. Stevens,	1879.
Francis A. Whitney,	1879.
Orlando Mason,	1880.
Charles Winchester,	1882.
Henry M. Tyler,	1882.
George P. Davis,	1882.

*Presidents :*

Rev. Dr. Wayland,	1865-1867.
Gov. Bullock,	1867-1876.
Dr. Lowe,	1876.

*Vice-Presidents :*

Gov. Bullock,	1865-1867.
Hon. Amasa Norcross,	1867.

*Treasurers :*

E. Torrey, Esq.,	1865-1876.
Hon. Ohio Whitney,	1876-1879.
G. F. Stevens, Esq.,	1879.

*Clerks :*

Rev. J. D. Crosby,	1865-1876.
Col. Geo. H. Barrett,	1876.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### BOUNDARIES.

DONATIONS OF LAND TO OTHER TOWNS. — ORIGINAL AREA. — PROVINCE LINE.  
— INCORPORATION OF ASHBY. — GARDNER. — AREA SEVERED FROM ASH-  
BURNHAM. — THE FAMILIES. — LAND ANNEXED TO ASHBY. — THE PETI-  
TIONERS. — ASHBURNHAM RESISTS. — NEW BOUNDARIES. — THE FAMILIES.  
— A NEW TOWN PROPOSED. — MEETING-HOUSE BUILT. — RENEWED EFFORT  
AND OPPOSITION. — JOHN WARD AND WILLIAM BARRELL ANNEXED. —  
PETITION OF GEORGE WILKER AND OTHERS.

ENCROACHMENT upon the borders of this town has been a favorite pursuit of our neighbors. Four considerable tracts of land have been severed from the original township, and other attempts have been successfully resisted. Our fathers could spare the land such as it was, and no doubt both the donors and the recipients wished it had been better, but the loss of several worthy citizens was a more serious consideration. According to the surveys of the several grants the original township contained twenty-seven thousand one hundred and ninety acres. The early surveys were of liberal proportions. The wilderness from which the grants were severed was large and there was no one to protect the province from excessive measurements. The actual area of this township was very nearly thirty-one thousand acres. The first encroachment upon our domain of fair proportions was by the province of New Hampshire in 1741. By this act eight hundred and seventy-seven acres were severed from Dorchester Canada. The incorporation of Ashby severed



about fifteen hundred acres from the area of this town. The proceedings were so intimately connected with the incorporation of Ashburnham that they were admitted in an earlier chapter of these annals.

The erection of a new town out of parts of Ashburnham, Westminster, Templeton and Winchendon was earnestly debated and the preliminaries arranged as early as 1774. In the intent of the petitioners, in the generous impulse of the remaining portions of the several towns, in the general policy of the General Court to increase the number of the towns in the province, in the spirit of the event, Gardner is a decade older than the number of its years. The Revolution delayed but did not defeat the project. In the dawn of returning peace it was successfully renewed. So far as the action of Ashburnham is concerned, the suggestion of a new town near the close of the Revolution was not presented as a new measure, but as a continuation of the proceedings begun several years earlier. In 1774, or eleven years before Gardner was incorporated, the town "voted that the petitioners from Westminster and other towns be so far answered in their petition as to take the lands, after named, from this town beginning at the northwest corner of Kelton's lot, number 46, second division, and running from thence on a straight line to the southeast corner of William Ames' lot, number 55, in the second division, and the said corner of land is voted off to join with the other towns to be incorporated into a district."

Referring to this vote it was proposed in 1781, "To see if the town would vote off two ranges of lots in addition to what was formerly voted off in the southwest corner." Whereupon the town, May 21, 1781, amended the former vote but added only a small part of the two ranges included in the proposition.



Voted that the southwest corner of this town be set off to join with a part of Westminster and Winchendon into a separate town as far as the following lots viz.: beginning at the northwest corner of lot number 45, second division; from thence by the north line of said lot to the northeast corner of said lot; from thence straight to the northeast corner of lot number 55, second division; thence by the east line of said lot to Westminster town line. Including 2348 acres.

The point of beginning, as defined by this vote, is about eighty rods north of the point established in 1774. The other terminus in Westminster line is the same in both votes. When Gardner was incorporated four years later the land severed from Ashburnham, and consequently the line then established between the two towns, coincided at all points with the line defined in the last vote of this town. In later years the line has been broken at two points, at least, for the accommodation of individuals. The records of Ashburnham in this connection define only one of the boundary lines of the territory severed from this town. If the existing lines between Ashburnham and Winchendon and between Ashburnham and Westminster be extended, the former southerly and the latter southwesterly, they will meet at Gardner Centre, and with the former line will enclose the triangular area that, until 1785, was a part of Ashburnham. Concerning the number of acres included within these lines the doctors disagree. Rev. Dr. Cushing, in his historical discourse, estimates it at four thousand acres. To the record of the vote the town clerk has appended, "including 2348 acres." This amount is too small but it is much nearer exactness than the more liberal conjecture of Mr. Cushing.

Ashburnham, still rich in the extent of its territory, could easily afford the lands donated to the new town, but the loss of several worthy citizens from the municipal community



was a more important consideration. The families residing on the area severed from this town were in themselves and have continued in their descendants a material element of the character and population of Gardner.

Captain Samuel Kelton came from Needham to this town 1778, and settled on land belonging to the heirs of Edward Kelton who was an early proprietor of right number 47, and afterwards of right number 49. The eminent services of Captain Kelton are noticed in another connection. He resided on the northern part of the land set off to Gardner and near the line of Winchendon. In 1785 his family comprised a wife and three or four children. One child died in this town November 30, 1780.

Marvrick Hill, from Medway, and five sons, three of whom had families, resided in this town several years before their farms were annexed to Gardner. Moses Hill, the eldest son, had four children in 1785, and in the family of Jesse Hill, another son of Marvrick, were three or four children. Mr. Cushing has left the record of the baptism of James Marvrick and Thomas Adams, sons of Moses Hill, and Enos and William, sons of Samuel Kelton, baptized at the house of Mr. Hill, at a lecture. In another connection Mr. Cushing refers to "the lecture at Mr. Hill's in the southwest part." In these families there were probably twenty-two persons.

Josiah Wilder removed to this town from Sterling about 1776. His wife and one child died in 1782, and he married, second, February 4, 1784, Joanna Baker. He was a distant relative of other families of same name in this town. Three children were living in 1785.

Jonas Richardson came from Shrewsbury in 1781, and was admitted to the church in Ashburnham October 21 of that year. In 1785 his family consisted of his wife and eight children, the eldest thirteen years of age.



John White was born in Lexington, June 1, 1748, and settled in the east part of the tract annexed to Gardner about six years before the incorporation of that town. There were three children in 1785.

Peter Goodale was born in Shrewsbury, December 12, 1751. He was married in the north parish of Shrewsbury, now West Boylston, March 9, 1775, and their eldest child was born there December 23, 1775. Soon after the last date the family removed to this town. They had four children when Gardner was incorporated.

Scarcely had Ashburnham generously and good-humoredly contributed materially to the creation of Gardner before another draft was made upon its domain and inhabitants. This time, the attack was made upon the opposite corner of the town. In the end it was vigorously opposed. The original line of Ashby extended from an existing town bound on Blood or Prospect hill, nearly due north to the State line. For twenty-five years the northeast corner of Ashburnham was nearly two miles east of the present corner. A number of families in this part of the town for several years had not been in sympathy with a majority of the town in the support of the ministry. And as soon as a new meeting-house was proposed their slumbering discontent was fanned in open revolt. In the spring of 1791, under the leadership of John Abbott, they signified to Ashby a desire to be annexed to that town. Ashby promptly responded in a vote "to receive Isaac Whitney, Josiah Burgess, James Pollard, James Bennett, Joseph Damon, Jeremiah Abbott, John Hall, Daniel Brown, John Abbott, Amos Brooks, John Shattuck and others with their lands together with the non-resident land within the bounds of a plan that they shall exhibit to the town if they can be legally annexed to this town." The following month a meeting was convened in



this town "To hear the petition of Ensign John Abbott and others requesting to be voted off with fourteen hundred acres of land to be annexed to Ashby if the town see fit." The town did not see fit. The petitioners were answered with a cold and unqualified refusal. Undaunted, they renewed their solicitation and caused another meeting to be called in the autumn of the same year. At this stage of the proceedings the town attempted to crush the revolt by pacifying the leader of it and proceeded to "vote off" about five hundred acres including the homestead and other lands of Mr. Abbott. The proposed compromise was a failure. The petitioners refusing to accept the proposition renewed their original demands and secured another town meeting early in the spring of 1792. Again the town refused to grant their petition. It is plain the petitioners were depreciating in the good opinion of the town. The gentleman, whom they styled at the outset as Ensign John Abbott, is now called Mr. John Abbott and soon after he was degraded to plain John Abbott. Another town meeting was called in May, 1792, at which the town "voted to oppose any families or land being taken from this town and annexed to Ashby more than was voted off at a former meeting and that the representative act in behalf of the town in that matter at the General Court,—the vote being unanimous except seven persons and those were petitioners for being set off."

The issues were now sharply defined and the controversy was transferred to the Legislature. Samuel Wilder, Abraham Lowe and Jacob Willard were chosen to remonstrate with the Legislature against this encroachment upon the territory of the town. Jacob Willard, also, was the representative at this time. The earnest effort of the town and its agents in opposition to the measure was met with defeat. The act, severing the land of the petitioners from this town,



was passed November 16, 1792. By the terms of the act the northeast corner of Ashburnham on the State line was established five hundred and four rods west of the former bound and at land of James Spaulding. The dividing line from the new corner extended southerly by the east line of James Spaulding one hundred and forty-five rods, and thence southeasterly eight hundred and seventy rods to the line of Ashby. Henry Hall, Sen., who lived within these limits, did not join in the petition. His farm was divided by this proposed line and by a special clause in the act all his land remained in this town.

If the purpose of the Legislature had been faithfully executed the dividing line between Ashburnham and Ashby would have been located between Ward and Watatic ponds and would have annexed to Ashby a larger area than was subsequently included within the established bounds. When the line was run southeasterly from the State line, local attraction at the base of Watatic mountain caused a variation of the needle, deflecting the course to the east. Giving a liberal construction to the act of the Legislature, the line was run straight to Blood or Prospect hill. The selectmen of Ashburnham and Ashby in a joint report informed their respective towns, "That when we came to the easterly corner of Potatuck hill a mine drewed the needle and ran between Henry Hall Jr.'s house and barn and came to the old line between Ashburnham and Ashby on a hill called Prospect hill and erected a stake and stones." The line here described, which was run according to the needle and not according to law, has been maintained to the present time; the only exception being a slight change to restore to Ashburnham a part of the farm of Lemuel Whitney, formerly of Henry Hall, Jr., which had been divided by the new line. The hidden mine at the base of Watatic



saved the town many acres of land. It is the only mine in Ashburnham that has been successfully operated. At the beginning it was worked for all it was worth and possibly its resources were early exhausted.

The families transferred to Ashby included those of John Abbott, five children; Jeremiah Abbott, two children; Daniel Brown, three children; James Bennett, two children; John Hall, one child; Amos Brooks, eight children; Isaac Whitney, four children; Judah Whitney, one child; the widow of Ephraim Whitney, two children; James Pollard, John Shattuck and Joseph Damon.

The remorseless knife of the General Court, which three times had clipped a considerable tract from the corners of the township, was next brandished over the peaceful hamlets in the southeast part of the town. These depredations on the borders were becoming a most serious matter. The original pentagonal township, with its sharp, projecting corners, would soon be trimmed to a diminutive circle if the process was not stayed. The project of creating a new town out of adjoining portions of Ashburnham, Westminster, Fitchburg and Ashby, now buried beneath the accumulating dust of ninety years, was bold and aggressive. The measure was forwarded with ability, but was crushed beneath the united opposition of the four adjoining towns. A list of the names of the persons engaged in the enterprise, and living within the limits of the proposed township, has been preserved. It bears the names of thirty citizens of Fitchburg, sixteen of Westminster, six of Ashburnham and two of Ashby. Eight, and possibly more, names were added previous to 1791 and one or more of these resided in Ashburnham. The movement originated in 1785.

The petitioners continued their solicitations and the town a persistent opposition until the beginning of the present



century. In the mean time the petitioners adopted a limited organization and built a meeting-house and laid out a common in anticipation of securing from the Legislature the desired act of incorporation. The meeting-house was built by voluntary contributions. The long list of pledges for the material presents a bewildering assortment of sills, beams, posts, girts, rafters, boards, shingles, nails, a little money, and other donations, to forward the undertaking. There was also a special subscription in labor and stimulating material to assist in framing and raising the building, — containing pledges for one hundred and fifty-eight days labor at framing, seventy-five at raising, a few modest sums of money, twenty-four bushels of rye, one hundred and fifty-eight quarts of rum and forty-five gallons of cider. With Landlords Cooper and Upton living hard by in case of a failure of any of the supplies, these doughty church builders, surveying their situation with complacency, entered on their records, "enough has been subscribed to raise and cover the meeting-house except a part of the boards and shingles."

In 1789, with spirit and understanding, as long as the last requisite remained, they raised a frame forty-five feet square. Two years were consumed in fitful efforts in completing the outside. The interior was never fully completed. The building, profanely called the Lord's barn standing in plain view on Cooper hill in Westminster, was a familiar object for many years. At a late day, it has been suggested that the impulse which led to the building of this house was a failure of sympathy with the creed of the surrounding churches. The most reliable information leads to the conclusion that they were adherents to the prevailing creed and could not fairly be considered as an association of dissenters. Their first effort to obtain preaching was a vote extending an invitation to the Orthodox ministers in Ashburnham, Winch-



endon, Westminster, Fitchburg and Lunenburg to preach to them. Many of the leading men in this enterprise were members of the standing order in the several towns in which they lived. Not organizing a church as they anticipated at the outset, their original relations were continued until dissolved by death.

Joshua Billings, Joseph Gibbs and Reuben Rice were members of the church in Ashburnham, and so was John Ward who lived over the line in Westminster. Even under the unyielding discipline of the time, their association with this movement did not provoke the censure of the church. The Lord's barn and its builders were orthodox. Of itself the old meeting-house in Westminster has little connection with the history of this town; but as a part of a more comprehensive project, as the first step towards the incorporation of the proposed town of Belvoir, it caused our fathers great alarm. The erection of an unpretentious building was of little moment, but this persistent attempt to slice a corner from the town greatly irritated the good citizens of Ashburnham. Four town meetings were called at an early date to oppose the movement. Samuel Wilder, Jacob Willard and John Adams were chosen to confer with the other towns and Joseph Jewett, Jacob Willard and John Adams were instructed to oppose the petitioners at the General Court.

The residents of Ashburnham included in this movement were Joseph Gibbs, Joshua Billings, Reuben Rice, Jonathan Winchester, Thomas Gibson and Silas Whitney. The scheme was revived in 1815 when forty-two petitioned for a town to be called Vernon. The following year a new petition bearing ninety-eight names was considered by the General Court and a public hearing was ordered. This time the petitioners suggested the name of Belvoir for the proposed town. Town meetings were promptly called and



Elisha White, George R. Cushing and Joseph Jewett were selected to oppose the Vernon petition. The Belvoir petition was successfully resisted by Elisha White, Thomas Hobart and Abraham Lowe, and thus ended a contest which had been continued over thirty years. From beginning to end the arguments of the petitioners were the same and stated with little change of language. The last petition was as follows :

The petition of the undersigned inhabitants of Fitchburg, Westminster, Ashburnham and Ashby humbly sheweth that whereas your petitioners are situated quite distant from the meeting-houses in the towns to which we respectively belong (especially in Westminster and Fitchburg, some in the former town living at the distance of seven miles from the meeting-house), and the land on which we live formed as if nature itself intended it for connection, and the interests of those living in the remaining parts of the towns, especially in Fitchburg and Westminster, being in many and most respects totally different from ours, it is therefore the prayer of your petitioners that the General Court would be pleased to incorporate us into a distinct and separate town by the name of Belvoir.

But Vernon and Belvoir found little support on Beacon hill. The little town with euphonious titles, so clearly outlined in the hopes and imagination of the petitioners, was destined to slumber in the gloom of defeat. Ashburnham was not only successful but recovered cost with the verdict. About this time the farms of John Ward and William Barrell and a considerable tract of non-resident land was severed from Westminster and annexed to this town.

Only one attempt to secure a change of the boundaries of the town occurred after this date. In 1827 George Wilker and twelve others, residing in the eastern part of the town, petitioned the Legislature to annex to Ashby all the land in



Ashburnham lying east of a straight line extending from the northwest to the southwest corner of Ashby. Henry Adams, Charles Barrett and Hosea Stone were chosen to remonstrate in the name of the town. The following year the petition was renewed and the Legislature sent a committee to view the premises. The town chose Joseph Jewett, Charles Barrett and Stephen Marble to confer with the committee. The measure was defeated, at an adjourned session of the Legislature, 1828.



## CHAPTER XV.

### ROADS AND RAILROADS.

THE PRIMITIVE ROADS. — THE NORTHFIELD ROAD. — EARLY ROADS IN ASHBURNHAM. — THE GREAT ROAD TO IPSWICH CANADA. — A COUNTY ROAD. — ROAD TO ASHEY LINE. — NEW ROADS. — THE TOWN INDICTED. — OTHER COUNTY ROADS. — SOUTH TURNPIKE. — THE WINCHENDON ROAD AMENDED. — TURNPIKES. — TEAMING. — EXPENDITURE. — ROAD COMMISSIONERS. — RAILROADS.

LIKE the veins in the human system centring at the heart, the primitive roads of every town had a general tendency towards the meeting-house. It was not until the movement of surplus production gave additional employment to the roads that much attention was paid to any outward facilities. The early roads of Ashburnham were for the benefit of the settlers within the town. The only roads which offered any suggestions for the accommodation of the surrounding towns were built under the commands of the court and in opposition to the will of a majority of the inhabitants. These roads from the first were styled County roads, and to keep them in repair a separate tax was assessed and special surveyors were chosen. The family of Jeremiah Foster rode into town in a cart drawn by oxen. The chaise in which rode the wife of Rev. Mr. Cushing on her wedding journey from Westborough to her future home could proceed no farther than Fitchburg and the remainder of the way was performed on horseback. But a general knowledge of these early times will present a good idea of the first roads in this town. So



far as any have been better or poorer than the average road of the time the fact will appear. If the number of roads in the early history of the town excites surprise, it should be remembered that every settler demanded one leading from his clearing to some existing road. With a reasonable estimate of those built within the independent grants previous to 1765, of which there is no record, it appears that no less than forty-five roads were laid out in this town previous to the Revolution. Many of these were only a continuation of an existing road or the substitution of a more feasible route, and in the mean time a considerable number were discontinued.

While Ashburnham remained a part of the vast wilderness of unappropriated land, bounded on the south by Townsend, Lunenburg and Westminster, and on the east and west by the settlements in the valleys of the Merrimack and Connecticut rivers, the road from Lunenburg to Northfield was cut through the forest. The distance was forty-two miles and it was constructed about 1733. John Fitch, in a petition to the General Court, states that in 1739 he settled on the Northfield road seven miles above Lunenburg. Mr. Fitch settled where Paul Gates now resides, in the southern part of Ashby. The petition establishes the location of the road at that point, and the account of the Cambridge and the Bellows or Bluefield grants in Chapter I. affords additional information in regard to its course through this town and the date of its construction. This ancient road entered Ashburnham north of Russell hill and near the point where the new road from Rindge to Fitchburg crosses the Ashby line. It continued through Lexington farm and north of Mount Hunger and northwesterly through the Bluefield grant into the north part of Winchendon. When the proprietors of Dorchester Canada established the boundary lines and came



into possession of the township, they found this road already opened and extending through their grant.

In 1752 a road was proposed from a point now in Ashby "along to the southward of Watatuck hill to the Bluefield road so called." Other mention of the Bluefield road gives no additional information in regard to its location at any point in its course through this town. In its westward course through the northern part of Winchendon it was sometimes called the Earlington road, for the reason that the grant of land adjoining Northfield was frequently called Earlington, or more correctly Arlington, now Winchester, New Hampshire. The road was constructed by the Willards, Bellows and Boyntons of Lunenburg to forward the settlement of that grant. The first road proposed by the proprietors of Ipswich Canada was "from Earlington to the meeting-house lot," meaning from some point in the Earlington or Northfield road to the meeting-house lot. At the next meeting they offered six pounds "to such proprietor as shall cut a horse way from Earlington road to the meeting-house lot." These two votes are parcels of the same project. The magnificent suggestion in the History of Winchendon that the first vote contemplated a road from Northfield to Ipswich Canada is extravagant. In the first vote supply the omission of the word "road" after Earlington, then the two votes are consistent. In any other light the worthies of Winchendon are found building a road from the meeting-house lot to Earlington and supplementing it with a road from the same point to the Earlington road.

The records do not define the location of some of the earliest roads in this town, but a considerable sum of money was expended for this purpose during the infancy of the settlement. The first road, which can be definitely located, was between the saw-mill and "the place where the meeting-



house is to stand as strait as the land will allow of." The first road of considerable length would naturally be some inlet from the lower towns. In 1742 a committee was chosen "to clear what is absolutely necessary in the eastern road already laid out and to see if a better road could be found out to Lunenburg." In 1743 "Edward Hartwell, Esq., and Mr. Andrew Wilder" were paid for marking out a road from the meeting-house to the west line.

In 1753 increased sums of money were paid to committees and laborers on account of the roads, but without reference to their location. The same year appears an article "to see if it would be agreeable to the proprietors to have the great road leading to Ipswich Canada and Royalshire six rods wide, as it is likely to be the principal road to the upper western towns and Albany." However agreeable it might have been to secure a road of such ambitious proportions, the proprietors voted they would not do it, and it is possible Albany never heard of it. The truth is, the proprietors so long delayed the building of any suitable road to the line of Ipswich Canada, that soon after this date the aid of the court was invoked and a county road was built. In the midst of these proceedings, with a buoyancy of spirit that approaches audacity, the proprietors vote to perfect all the roads in the township.

In 1758, and in succeeding years, with little change in the form of expression, an agent is chosen "to oversee those that shall be employed in working at the road, that they are faithful in their service and have no more allowed them than they deserve." In 1761 it was ordered "that the same committee, that laid out the road from the meeting-house to Mr. Winter's, proceed to lay out said road till it comes to the road by Mr. James Colman's house, excepting where it goeth through Stoger's farm, so called." Stoger's farm is



another name for Lexington grant or the Dutch farms. The proprietors were unable to tax the settlers on this or the other grants and were justly excused from building any roads through them. Andrew Winter lived near the west line of Lexington grant and James Coleman's house was near the Stacy mill in Ashby. In 1761 there was a division of the highway tax; six pounds was expended on the county road, nine pounds in the south part and four and one-half pounds in the north part of the township.

No sooner had the settlement assumed the dignity of a town than the building and maintenance of the roads became familiar subjects of legislation. Within two years fourteen roads were laid out by the selectmen and accepted by the town. Others followed in rapid succession. While many of these original roads now constitute a part of the existing highways they have been so many times extended and amended that their identity is buried beneath the weight of continued record. The first road laid out by the selectmen was from a point now in Ashby to meet a road south of the Reservoir pond:

June 27, 1765. We then Laid out a Road from Fitchburg Line through Bridge Farm and then the marks are on the West and South side of the Road to Stephen Ames'es.

N. B. The above said Road Runs through Lexington Farm, so Caled.

The bounds are generally stated in very indefinite terms, but a majority of them were said to end at the meeting-house or in some road leading to it which assists in locating very many of them.

Laid out a road from Samuel Fellows Juner to the meeting House Running North Through Wetherbees Land and Williams Land and Stones Land and Turning Northerly on Stones Land



and Dickersons Land and Sampsons Land and Oaks Land and Wheelers Land and Common Land till it comes to the publick meeting House, is two Rods wide and marked on the easterly side of said Road.

The general course of the above road recorded in 1765 is stated, but like many others its location at intermediate points cannot now be determined. In some instances, like the following, the care of a road was assumed by the town without the intervention of the selectmen :

The town excepted Mr. Melvins Road, sd Road runs from Nathan Melvin's by Willi<sup>m</sup> Benjamins and through Creehor's Lot and through Simeon Willards Lot & Oliver Willards Lot, and through Mr. Whitemoor's Lot through Elisha Coolidge's Lot to Bluefield Road sd. Road is two Rod wide and marked on y<sup>e</sup> Northerly side.

The first county road was not a voluntary enterprise, and probably it was not maintained with any degree of enthusiasm. In 1773 parties residing in adjoining towns secured its indictment. The town "chose Samuel Wilder, Esq., to make answer to the Court of General Sessions of the Peace to be holden at Worcester the last Tuesday of March instant to an Indictment found against the said Town by the grand Inquest for the body of said county, for not mending or keeping in repair the County road or King's Highway from Winchendon Town line to the meeting-house in Ashburnham."

The descriptive portion of the indictment affords some information of the condition of the road. The Court Records declare that it "was foundeours, miry and rocky, encumbered with great stones, deep mud, stumps and roots and destitute of necessary bridges whereby the travelling that is necessary in & through the same road is greatly impeded



and his Majesty's Liege Subjects who have occasion and right to pass and repass in and through the same road by themselves and with their horses, teams & carriages cannot conveniently and safely pass in & over the same road but in so doing are in great danger of losing their own lives & the lives of their cattle & of breaking and destroying their Carriages."

Mr. Wilder, clothed with plenary power, went to Worcester to make answer to the court, but when he heard himself addressed in such terms it is impossible to imagine what he had to say. To face a court breathing anathema and making such assault upon himself and his town required great courage and fortitude. Whether fear gave strength and courage to the ambassador or his utter discomforture appeased the temper of the court is uncertain. In any event the case was continued, and then the court, possibly in sorrow for an assault upon innocence, calmly reviewed the field and came to the conclusion that inasmuch as the road, meanwhile, had been repaired the town should be forgiven on the payment of five shillings and costs.

In 1776 the maintenance of a new county road was added to existing burdens. For several years after this date a special surveyor was chosen for the "south county road." It extended from the centre of the town past the school-house in the first district, and thence, nearly by the present road, past the Joseph Harris' place to the Westminster line.

Soon after the Revolution the project of a county road from Winchendon to Westminster, passing through the southwest corner of the town, was revived. With its usual alacrity in such cases, the town instructed the selectmen to oppose the road. The following year the incorporation of Gardner intervened and with other legacies the town transferred all responsibility in the premises to the young town.



But Ashburnham was scarcely relieved from one vexation concerning county roads before others of a more weighty character demanded attention.

In 1790 a county road in amendment of the old thoroughfare from Winchendon Centre was proposed. An agent was sent to Worcester, but his efforts were attended with limited success. Three years later the petition was renewed, and Samuel Wilder, Abraham Lowe and Colonel Francis Lane were selected to continue an active opposition to the project. The town instructed their committee to measure all the county roads in the town and to ask the court if any additional burdens would be reasonable and just. Again, a delay was effected, but the suspension of hostilities was only for a brief season. The petition was renewed in 1798. Samuel Wilder, on whom the town relied for council and service in every emergency, was dead. The town sent David Cushing, Joseph Jewett and Hezekiah Corey to the rescue, but without avail. The road was laid out and a majority of the town was greatly discomforted. Before the fate of this road, of which mention will be made again, was decided another of greater proportions was proposed. The preliminary proceedings were brief. Before the town had fairly set its face against it, a county road was laid to complete a line of travel from Winchendon Centre to Leominster, passing through this town by the town farm and on substantially the same route as the Fifth Turnpike was subsequently built; and, in fact, the county road influenced the location of the turnpike which was finally accepted in room of it. One of the advocates of this county road was Joseph Stone who lived on the farm later owned by the town. In this proceeding Mr. Stone was strongly opposed by a large majority of his townsmen and public sentiment upon this subject is reflected in the records. At first, the road was



styled Captain Stone's road, but as the controversy grew warmer it was called Stone's road, and there is a tradition in this town that the popularity of Mr. Stone faded as rapidly as the fortunes of the road were advanced.

After the road was laid the town selected Abraham Lowe, Joshua Smith and Joseph Jewett to draw up a remonstrance in support of an appeal to the General Court. The proposed construction of the turnpike offered the town some relief, and measures were introduced to influence the location of the turnpike in a manner that would lead the court to discontinue the original road. Ebenezer Munroe, Joseph Jewett and John Gates were chosen to confer with the directors of the turnpike, and upon hearing their report the town, 1802, "Voted to make the road from the foot of the hill below Abraham Foster's, so on to the county road by Oliver Samson's, at town expense on condition that Stone's road, so called, can be discontinued and the town be at no more cost or expense on or about said road. Also the town voted to put in one thousand dollars in the road on condition that it be made a turnpike road to run from Winchendon line by Nathaniel Foster's mill, so on to the foot of Abraham Foster's hill, so out by Oliver Samson's. Also voted to put in five hundred dollars on condition that they go with the road where they think best in the town, Stone's road, so called, to be discontinued and the town be at no further expense on account of Stone's road."

The following year the town made a fourth proposition, offering the corporation \$1500 if the turnpike was constructed over the old common. The corporation accepted the smallest sum offered and reserved the right to "go with the road where they think best in the town." The turnpike was built in 1805 and 1806 and the county road was discontinued.



The town next directed attention to an amendment of the first county road which had been ordered by the court. To this date the travel from Winchendon was compelled to make the ascent of Meeting-house hill, and thence abruptly down into the valley as it proceeded to Fitchburg. A more feasible route had been debated for several years, but the town steadily refused to divert any travel from the old common until the authority of the court had been invoked. A section of new road was now built, commencing at a point on the old road, one and one-half miles west of the old common and meeting the road again in front of the present residence of Seth P. Fairbanks. This road was built in 1817 at a cost of \$1060. It was clearly a benefit to the public, but the dwellers around the old common, and many others, who shared with them a commendable regard for the centre of their town, its meeting-house, its cemetery, its pound and its aristocracy, were greatly discomforted. When this enterprise was completed it was the most thoroughly constructed section of road in the town. The conditions required it "to be sixteen feet between the ditches, crowned eighteen inches in the centre and all stones to be removed that come within six inches of the surface." Before this road was completed measures were taken to secure the indictment of the road leading from the centre of the town to the guide-board near the house of Caleb Ward who then resided west of Lane Village and near Lower Naukeag lake. At a special town meeting some one proposed to repair the road by subscription and escape an indictment. Thirty days' labor were immediately pledged, and then the town complacently directed that the labor be performed at once, and after that the complaint be defended by the town if prosecuted.



Commencing with the present century there was an era of turnpikes. After the extreme depression in business, which was the natural consequence of the drain of the Revolutionary War, the country made substantial progress in wealth and development. A moderate accumulation of capital began to seek channels of investment and every enterprise which promised a fair return for the capital employed failed not for want of money or the encouragement and support of business men. Stimulated by an increasing travel and traffic to and from the centres of trade, turnpikes built and controlled by corporations were extended into every field of supply. Towns on the lines of these thoroughfares were greatly benefited, and great efforts were made to influence their location. Taverns, stores and blacksmith shops were multiplied and many of them were mainly dependent on the patronage of these roads.

An early line of travel from the north and west was from Keene through Jaffrey and New Ipswich and thence to Boston by way of Townsend. It was incorporated in 1799, and built without delay. Another turnpike incorporated 1802, from Keene through Winchendon and Leominster, passed by on the other side. This Levite came nearer and indeed was located through the southwest part of the town, but it was of little local benefit. It is now included in the town roads, and the houses of John M. Pratt, John V. Platts and Stephen Wood are on the line of it. The next turnpike in this vicinity came no nearer. It was incorporated in 1807 and completed 1811. It was an important line of travel from Keene through Rindge, Ashby and Groton. This turnpike entered Ashburnham near the residence of Edwin J. Stearns, and the present road from that point, where there was a toll-gate, to the Ashby line at Watatic pond, marks its course through the corner of the town. While this turn-



pike was patronized considerably by the inhabitants, it was of little benefit to the town. If Ashburnham was not highly favored by this era of turnpikes, the inhabitants generally escaped the losses which ultimately attended the depreciation of stock.

In other towns many men of comparative wealth were financially ruined, and the savings of the poor, which were allured by golden promises from the scanty accumulations of continued toil and many self-denials, were lost in the general ruin which ensued. If these early turnpikes were not successful from a financial standpoint they greatly encouraged the growth and development of the country, and by competition and example they did much to improve the general condition of the other roads.

About the time of the decline of the turnpikes a large amount of money was expended in building and repairing roads. A new line of travel, in which this town had a lively interest, was opened through the valley of Miller's river and from Winchendon through the centre of Ashburnham to Fitchburg and the lower towns. For many years long lines of teams and a great amount of pleasure travel passed through the central village. Very many now living are fond of telling of the heavy wagons, drawn by four, six and eight horses, laden with produce for the market and returning with merchandise for the country stores, or of the four and six horse stages that daily passed each way. The scenes of life and activity that attended their arrival and departure and other features of those days are well remembered. The active landlord answered the demands of many guests, while the busy hostlers in the spacious barns grew weary in attendance upon the overflowing stalls. The hammer of the smith awoke the stillness of night and the fire in the forge scarcely burned out before the beginning of a



new day. A much larger business to-day is done with one tithe of the noise and confusion of the olden time. Then, the newspapers, unaided by the telegraph and other modern facilities, gave little information of passing events. Items of intelligence were noisily communicated by word of mouth while bustling crowds around the taverns and the stores gathered the latest news from the passing traveller. Now, the current price of commodities and the records of the world are gleaned from the papers in the quiet retirement of home. Then, orders for goods and the general intercourse of trade were often verbal messages transmitted through many mouths. The message of to-day, silently committed to the mail, or to the swifter transmittal of the telegraph and the responding shipment of merchandise, left by the passing train, are in happy contrast with the noisy methods of the olden time.

During the construction of the Fitchburg railroad from point to point, the teams and stages in that direction made shorter journeys, but the condition of affairs at this point was not materially changed; but the building of the Vermont and Massachusetts and the Cheshire railroads which soon followed drove the stages and the teams from the road.

The amount expended for the annual repair of the roads during the early history of the town conformed to the increase of population and secured highways that reasonably met the requirements of the times. The appropriation in 1770 was £35; in 1773, £80; in 1790, £120; in 1800 the sum was increased to \$900. For many years the town chose one and sometimes two surveyors for the county roads and committed the town roads to the care of from two to ten persons, the number being gradually increased as the roads were extended and more thoroughly repaired. In 1818 the town was divided into twenty-one highway districts. The county



roads and turnpikes, gradually losing their individual character, were included among the several districts. In 1845 the number of highway districts was increased to twenty-five, which, with slight changes, were continued until a recent date. From the first, and until the present system was adopted, a surveyor was annually chosen for each district. In 1832 and 1837 the town voted to raise one-half the usual amount in money, but before the tax was assessed the action was reconsidered and the former system of a labor tax was continued until a comparatively recent period. The amount annually expended for the repair of the highways was gradually increased from \$900 to \$1500; the last sum was deemed sufficient until 1865, when \$1800 was raised, and since that date the amount has ranged from \$2500 to \$4500. In 1870 the town committed the care of the highways to the selectmen and the following year a board of commissioners was established. The members are elected for three years. On this board Simeon Merritt has served eleven years; Samuel Howard, nine years; Jesse Parker, two years; Stephen Wood, three years; Frederic E. Willard, three years; Charles H. Whitney, one year; Robert W. McIntire, six years; Charles W. Whitney, 2d, five years; Justin W. Bemis, one year. The three last named constitute the present board.

**RAILROADS.** — The charter of the Vermont and Massachusetts railroad, now operated by the Fitchburg railroad, is dated March 15, 1844, but the road was graded from Fitchburg to South Ashburnham in the summer and autumn preceding and in anticipation of an act of incorporation. At this point there arose an animated contest over the continued location of the road. For two years it was an even question whether it would be extended through Gardner or through Winchendon. In this controversy the town of Ashburnham



was an indifferent spectator, as in either event it would not materially change its course through this town. The business men early perceived that the route through Gardner, which was finally adopted, would accommodate this town as well as the other, and it would also leave an invitation to the Cheshire railroad, then in contemplation, to build from Winchendon through Ashburnham Centre to Fitchburg. For a season the town was so deeply engrossed with this project that little attention was paid to the controversy over the location of the first railroad that was built within the town. The causes and influences which controlled the location of both of these roads were wholly outside of Ashburnham, and while a considerable portion of the town were disappointed neither of them approached the central village. Both of the roads have been of material benefit to the town.

THE ASHBURNHAM RAILROAD lies wholly within this town and materially contributes to the general prosperity of the place. It is young in years and limited in length, yet it has more history to the linear mile and in certain years of its duration has developed more stratagem than has attended the fortunes of many older and longer roads. The difficulties which surrounded its construction and early management are fortunately settled and only the exterior history of the road demands attention. In May, 1871, a charter was obtained for a line of railroad from the junction of the existing roads to the central village, a distance of about two miles. A committee, consisting of George C. Winchester, Austin Whitney, William P. Ellis, Ohio Whitney and George H. Barrett, was immediately chosen to solicit subscriptions to the capital stock which, at this stage of the proceedings, was limited to one hundred thousand dollars. To aid and encourage the enterprise the town of Ashburnham, on a vote to invest five per cent. of its valuation, purchased shares to the amount of



forty-eight thousand dollars. Eleven thousand five hundred dollars was subscribed by three men residing in Fitchburg and in Boston and the remainder of the stock was taken by residents of this town. At the organization of the corporation which promptly ensued, George C. Winchester, Ohio Whitney, Austin Whitney, Addison A. Walker of Ashburnham, Daniel Nevins, Jr., Hiram A. Blood and Otis T. Ruggles were chosen a board of directors. George C. Winchester was subsequently chosen president and Colonel George H. Barrett clerk and treasurer.

The construction of the road was prosecuted with energy and without any unreasonable delay. About the first of January, 1874, the road was completed and a turn table and engine house were built at the northern terminus, but the depot was not erected until the following year. At the annual meeting in the summer of this year, the following board of directors was chosen: Austin Whitney, Addison A. Walker, Walter R. Adams, Simeon Merritt, Ohio Whitney, Daniel Nevins, Jr., and Thomas H. Clark. William P. Ellis was chosen clerk and treasurer and was continued in office until the corporation was dissolved. He was also station agent and to his care was confided the details of the operation of the road. In 1875 Mr. Nevins declined a reelection and the board was increased to nine members. The new members elected were George C. Winchester, Franklin Russell and George G. Rockwood. The only change in the board of directors in 1876 was the election of Wilbur F. Whitney, in room of Austin Whitney. From 1874 to 1877 the road was equipped and operated by the stockholders under the immediate management of the board of directors. In the adjustment of claims against the corporation the debt was gradually increased and the earnings did not exceed the current expenses to an extent that afforded



any relief. The corporation issued mortgage bonds for twelve thousand dollars and at that time it was generally presumed that ultimately all the debts would be liquidated by the net earnings of the road. In 1877, and after the road had been in operation three years, George C. Winchester demanded payment of a claim of eleven thousand five hundred dollars for personal service. This demand was unanswered for a season with a spirit of resistance and a consciousness of inability to pay it. A final settlement was subsequently made, and in the summer of 1877, the franchise of the road and the rolling stock were conveyed to Mrs. Winchester and the corporation was dissolved. To this enterprise the town and the inhabitants of Ashburnham have contributed eighty-eight thousand five hundred dollars. The loss was serious to a few. Had the burden been more equally distributed, it is probable that in the general utility and convenience of the Ashburnham railroad, every one will find ample compensation for the loss sustained. Mrs. Winchester continued to own and operate the road in the interest of the public until 1885 when it was sold to the Fitchburg railroad corporation.



## CHAPTER XVI.

### HOTELS AND STORES.

THE FIRST INN.—SEVERAL EARLY INNOLDERS. — UNCLE TIM'S.—THE COCK-EREL TAVERN.—TWO HOTELS ON MAIN STREET. — CHILDREN OF THE WOODS. — A NEW TAVERN. — THE CENTRAL HOUSE. — THE FRYE TAVERN. — THE TAVERN AT FACTORY VILLAGE.

THE STORES. — THE FIRST STORE. — THE JEWETTS AND THEIR SUCCESSORS.—MADAME CUSHING A MERCHANT. — SEVERAL SMALL STORES.—THE WINCHESTERS.—ADAMS AND GREENWOOD. — ELLIS AND LANE. — NEWTON HAYDEN. — PARKER BROTHERS.—MARBLE AND GILSON.—GEORGE ROCKWOOD. — ELLIOT MOORE. — MIRICK STIMSON. — STORES IN SOUTH ASH-BURNHAM.

INNS or taverns were numerous in the olden times, and a fictitious prominence is frequently assigned them. Around these ancient hostelries tradition is wont to linger and prone to crown them with a dignity they did not enjoy and to regard them with a peculiar charity especially reserved for the dead. In fact, a large majority of them were simply farm-houses in which the traveller was entertained. The proprietor was more a farmer than a landlord and the business was only supplementary to his stated avocation. And often in the pursuit of gain the license of the innholder was secured more for the sale of spirituous liquors than for a rational entertainment of man and beast.

The first inn of this town, of which there is any record or tradition, was built upon the old Bluefield road extending from Lunenburg to Northfield. It was situated on the Bellow's grant in the northwest part of this town, and was not



occupied after 1744, when the settlement was abandoned. The Court Records represent that Moses Foster was a licensed innholder in 1751 and through several succeeding years. He lived at first in the northeast part of the town and at an early date removed to a lot adjoining, south of the common. His house after he removed was an inn, but it is uncertain at which place he was residing when first licensed. The next landlord who appeared on the scene was Nathan Dennis who lived at Lane Village and owned the mill. He was here only two years, 1753 and 1754. In 1756 Thomas Wheeler in the northeast part of the town was an innholder and was succeeded by James Coleman who was included within Ashby in 1765. For several years, commencing with 1759, Elisha Coolidge was licensed. He probably resided in the house previously occupied by Nathan Dennis. In 1767 Nathan Melvin who lived near the Amos Pierce place, in the eighth school district, received permission from the court to entertain the solitary traveller who might accidentally pass that way. Captain Deliverance Davis was a licensed innholder in 1767 but he did not continue in the business many years. Among the ancient hostelries in this town none were so popular as "Uncle Tim's." Tradition assigns no other name to the public house kept by Timothy Willard. He was probably the first landlord in this town who ever gave his undivided attention to the business and his house was known "from Canada to Boston." On his tables often were fresh pickerel which an hour before were sporting in the clear waters of Upper Naukeag. At this inn Dr. Lowe was entertained the first years of his residence in this town. The house was on the old road from Ashburnham to Winchendon, on the site of the residence of Mrs. David W. Russell. In 1798 David Russell, Sen., purchased the hotel and farm and continued the business. He



procured a new sign on which was painted a profile of a chanticleer in the constant occupation of crowing over the fame of the place. In a few years, so fickle is fame, the name of "Uncle Tim" was heard no more. The inn was known as the "Cockerel Tavern."

About the close of the century two hotels were opened on Main street,—one by Captain David Cushing, where Nahum Wood now lives, and one on the opposite side of the street, over which Joseph Jewett presided when not engaged in other pursuits. Commencing with about 1815, and continuing with a waning patronage until about thirty years ago, there was a hotel on the north turnpike, and either the hotel or the locality was familiarly known as Children of the Woods. The travel on that once busy thoroughfare has been diverted into other channels and the old hotel has fallen with the weight of years. There was a hotel several years where the brick store now stands. It was built by John Adams, son of the centenarian, about 1826. Hobart F. Kibling and Merrick Whitney were the landlords. In the same building there was a store which is mentioned in another connection. This hotel was built soon after the road from Winchendon to Fitchburg had been thoroughly repaired and many teams from Vermont and the valley of Miller's river passed through this town. The new hotel was successful and its prosperity led to the building of another on the opposite side of the street, now known as the Central House. The hotel last mentioned was built by Captain Silas Whitney in 1829, but it was not finished until 1832. It was called the Washington House and in front, leaving space for the passage of teams, there was a huge sign suspended between two posts. The sign bore a supposed likeness of George Washington who proclaimed that he, at least, was a cold water man by having beneath him a huge watering-



trough which occupied all the space between the posts. In this house, also, Hobart F. Kibling was the first landlord. He was succeeded by Samuel Whitney and his sons who had acquired possession of the property. Later, the house was conducted by Stimson and Howe and by Knight and Forristall who were succeeded by Israel W. Knight, a son of one of the preceding landlords. Mr. Knight conducted the business many years and until his death, September 5, 1858. His son, James M. Knight, succeeded him, remaining in the business two or three years. Ferdinand Petts was the next landlord. The property was purchased by Walter R. Adams, 1866, who assumed the management of the business until 1879 when he was succeeded by John C. Stone. Mr. Stone has thoroughly repaired the buildings and built a block of stores on the site of the driveway. The appearance and convenience of the buildings are much improved and the house is well conducted.

The Frye Tavern, more recently known as the Astor House, was a prosperous hotel fifty years ago. The landlords were James Frye, Merrick Whitney, James Barrett, Orin Morton and Otis Metcalf. It has been owned many years by the Cheshire railroad and occupied by tenants.

About the time the Frye Tavern was opened, Norman Stone had a hotel at Factory Village for several years. Public houses on the main lines of travel were numerous in those days and many at intermediate points between the villages were successful.

STORES.—Until the close of the Revolution there were no stores in Ashburnham. If any one returned from the centres of trade with goods, which were offered for sale, the business was not of sufficient magnitude or duration to secure the appellation of merchant or surround his abode with the dignity of a store. In the mean time the store in Lunen-



burg was frequently visited, and upon an old ledger of Moses Whitney, who had a store in Rindge in 1772, are extended accounts with several residents of this town. It is probable, however, that, for many years, the greater part of the home supplies were procured in the lower towns in exchange for the product of the farm, or for shingles, split and shaved from the stately pines which were abundant at that time.

Joseph Jewett, Esq., removed to this town in 1783, and immediately opened a store in his dwelling-house which stood at the corner of Main and Cushing streets. In a few years he built a store near by which remains to this time and is a part of the building owned and occupied by Charles Hastings. Associated in trade with Mr. Jewett for one year, about 1790, was Samuel Appleton, the generous benefactor of several educational and charitable institutions, and in later years General Ivers Jewett was admitted to a partnership with his father. The Jewetts were men of enterprise, and succeeded in building up a prosperous business which was extended into the surrounding towns. They exchanged goods for every product of the farm, sending annually many tons of pork, butter, cheese, grain and wool to the seaboard. Ashes, too, with them, were an acceptable tender for goods from the store. These they converted into potash and forwarded it to the market. In later years they received yarns from the Slaters of Rhode Island and other manufactures of the time. At that time the power loom was a sleeping dream in the soul of invention. This yarn was distributed among the families who wove it in hand-looms, returning the cloth to the store and receiving their pay in goods. In this and many other ways these enterprising merchants invited trade. They offered every facility for the payment of goods. They entered into close relations



with the people of Ashburnham and many others in the adjoining towns. In accordance with a custom of the times they sold wines and liquors in quantity and by the glass. They supplemented their business with an inn, and mixed and vended grog from the ramparts of the store and the skirmish line of the hotel. They clothed the naked, fed the hungry, relieved the thirsty, and in their more substantial trade provided all against future want. The "Jewett Store" was an institution which suffered no rival and has witnessed no successor.

Joseph Jewett retiring from an active interest in the business it was continued by General Ivers Jewett. For a short time Colonel Hosea Stone was associated with General Jewett, and in 1824 Samuel Woods, who had been a clerk in the store nine years, bought a half interest and the firm became known as Jewett and Woods. Soon after, the new firm bought a store and a cotton-mill in Fitchburg and sold the store in this town to Samuel Barrett. The Fitchburg enterprise was not successful. General Jewett, in this and other speculative transactions, met with less success than had attended his career as a merchant. In 1828 Samuel Woods bought the store of Mr. Barrett and returned to Ashburnham and in company with George H. Lowe he continued in trade until 1831. Samuel S. Stevens succeeded Mr. Lowe, and soon after Jonathan O. Bancroft and Elbridge Stimson were admitted to the firm then known as Woods, Stevens & Co. In 1833 they sold to George H. Lowe who continued in trade until 1842. Mr. Lowe sold to Jacob Osgood of Weston, whose son, Charles, had an interest in the business. The Osgoods were succeeded in 1851 by James Learned who was in business sixteen years when he sold the store and goods to Henry Vanness, who, with unruffled placidity, fostered a waning trade until 1877,



when the curtain fell. The fastened door and the boarded windows shut out the light of day but not the memory of many years.

The second store in order of date, and the first in the elevation and dignity of its surroundings, was on the old common. Here Mrs. Cushing, assisted by her sons, conducted a small trade several years. The modest store was at the east of the common and was established about 1795. A few years later Deacon Heman Lincoln, on this site, erected a dwelling-house and enlarged the store. For a short time he conducted the business and was succeeded by Doddridge Cushing, who continued in trade several years, when the Jewetts purchased the goods and removed them to the foot of the hill. Subsequently, Leonard Stearns, from New Ipswich, was in trade a year or more, and later Charles Hastings purchased the real estate, enlarged and repaired the buildings, bought new goods and continued in trade until 1829. He sold to Lemuel Stimson, and in the spring of 1830 the business was assumed by his sons, Elbridge and Mirick, who closed out in 1833, and since then no one has engaged in trade at this place.

About the time the Jewetts withdrew from an active interest in trade three small stores were opened in this town. William Brooks in the house of his father, Thaddeus Brooks, in the ninth school district conducted a limited business several years; and Reuben Rice, who lived in the fourth school district where Alfred D. Kinsman now resides, had a store in his house an equal length of time. Neither of these securing a monopoly of the trade, Asahel Corey and Salmon Rice opened a store on Water street. Later Mr. Rice sold his interest to Levi Corey. The Coreys were succeeded in 1839 by Charles Winchester, and it was in this store of modest pretension that Mr. Winchester outlined the first



chapter of an active, successful career. Asahel and Levi Corey, having sold their business in Water street, opened a new store in the hotel building on the site of the brick store. After a few years they were succeeded by Philip R. Merriam who removed from a small store on the south turnpike. Mr. Merriam and his son were followed by Horace C. Crehore who continued in trade several years.

In 1842 Charles Winchester sold the store he had out-grown on Water street and bought this store. Six years later he admitted his brother, George C. Winchester, to an equal partnership. They were eminently successful. For the accommodation of an increasing trade, and to provide accounting rooms for their other business they erected, in 1855, the substantial building now occupied by Adams and



THE BRICK STORE, NOW OF ADAMS & GREENWOOD. ERECTED BY  
C. & G. C. WINCHESTER, 1855.

Greenwood. The firm was dissolved in 1870, and George C. Winchester continued the business until 1879. This



store was reopened in 1881 by Adams and Greenwood, the partners being Walter R. Adams and Moses P. Greenwood. With a full line of miscellaneous goods, they at once secured an extensive trade and are reaping the fruit of merited success.

The store now occupied by Parker Brothers was built by Ivers White in 1855, and leased to William P. Ellis for eight years. Mr. Ellis formed a partnership with Martin B. Lane, and under the name of Ellis and Lane they conducted a trade in stoves, tinware and groceries for several years. The firm was then dissolved by the retirement of Mr. Lane, who removed the stove and tinware department to the store in the Town Hall. Newton Hayden being admitted to a partnership with Mr. Ellis, the business was enlarged and included the wares usually displayed in a country store. In 1866 Mr. Hayden became sole proprietor, and he was succeeded by several firms which included Hon. Ohio Whitney, Walter R. Adams, Moses P. Greenwood and Captain Walter O. Parker. In 1876 Captain Parker and his brother, Frank H. Parker, under the firm name of Parker Brothers, assumed the business. Under their judicious management, the demands of the community have been fully answered and a good trade has been firmly established.

After the removal of Mr. Lane to the Town Hall, he was associated with Joel P. Marble, and in 1876 he was succeeded by Frank B. Gilson. The business was continued under the firm name of Marble and Gilson. In 1880 they built a new store on Central street and added a line of groceries to their former trade. They continue in the management of a prosperous business. There were earlier dealers in stoves and tinware than any named in the preceding paragraphs. Benjamin Merriam was an early dealer in this line of ware in the old store on Water street, and Elliot Moore, for a few



years, was in this line of trade in the George Rockwood store.

George Rockwood opened a store about 1833, where Marshall Wetherbee now resides. He continued in trade several years and a part of the time Dr. William H. Cutler had an interest in the business. He was succeeded by the Union Store, which was continued four years, and later Elliot Moore continued the business a few years.

After Asahel Corey had been in trade on Water street and in the hotel building on the south side of the street, he built in 1846 a store on the site of the residence of George C. Winchester. In this building his son, Jonas Corey, opened a store and was succeeded immediately by George Rockwood and Austin Whitney. Then the firm of Corey, Barrett and Kibling, comprising Jonas Corey, Colonel Francis J. Barrett and Joseph W. Kibling, was actively engaged in trade at this place for a few years. They were succeeded by Austin Whitney, and while his brother, Samuel V. Whitney, was postmaster, the post-office was located here. The building was purchased by George C. Winchester in 1856 and remodelled soon after.

George W. Kibling, who lived in Lane Village, where Merrick Hadley now resides, had a store in his house a few years, commencing about 1835. There was no other store in this village until Mirick Stimson began trade in 1868. Mr. Stimson has continued without interruption to the present time. In North Ashburnham, Asa R. Lovell was in trade about three years, commencing in the autumn of 1845. The goods were owned by several gentlemen who lived in that vicinity, and who sustained the store as a local enterprise. The goods were subsequently sold at auction. Except the trade in groceries conducted by Daniels Ellis, there have been no other stores in this village.



Stores in the village of South Ashburnham have been numerous. In 1822 Jonas Munroe opened a store and continued in trade several years. The building occupied by Mr. Munroe was later the ell of the Deacon Glazier shop. Mr. Benjamin E. Wetherbee, the present owner of the premises, tore it down a year ago and completed its history. Hosea Hosley, in 1836, began trade in a building still known as the red store, opposite the residence of Hezekiah Matthews. After a vacancy of several years, the next trader in this store was Lewis G. Matthews, who, with a line of groceries and patent medicines, began business in 1852, and continued until 1874. Oliver A. Raymond, in the autumn of 1846, began business under favorable auspices in the May store. He died the following year and the goods were sold out by his brother. The Protective Union Store was opened in the May building in 1848. Stores established on this plan were found at this date in almost every village. Generally conducted by men unskilled in the arts of trade, very few of them were successful. This proved no exception, and was closed before the expiration of a year. The May store, which, like the temple of Janus, has been sometimes open and sometimes closed, was occupied a year and a half, commencing August, 1863, by John B. Day, who displayed a line of dry goods and groceries. In 1868 Mr. Day resumed business in the same building. The following year he was succeeded by Stephen V. Ware, who remained two years and again the doors were closed. The next occupant was Luther Osborn, who continued about three years, and from that time until 1876, the store was unoccupied. In the autumn of that year Stephen V. Ware resumed trade with a line of dry goods and groceries. In March, 1884, he sold to John Davis, who moved the following summer into the store under Union Hall where



he was recently succeeded by Alfred E. Garlick and James H. Long, who have built up a prosperous trade.

More to accommodate his employées than to solicit a general trade, Edward S. Flint dealt in staple groceries about nineteen years, commencing 1857. In 1866 Mrs. Mary Blodget fitted a room in her dwelling for the accommodation of a limited stock of ladies' furnishing goods. The business was successfully continued eight years. Near the depots, Sumner H. Upham, Francis Eaton, Sewell S. Lane and Stephen V. Ware have each been in trade a short time.



## CHAPTER XVII.

### MECHANICAL INDUSTRIES.

PROMINENT POSITION OF ASHBURNHAM. — THREE EARLY MILLS. — A MULTITUDE OF GRAIN-MILLS AND SAW-MILLS. — THE MANUFACTURE OF CHAIRS. — THE GREAT NUMBER ENGAGED. — JOHN EATON. — THE PIONEERS. — PHILIP R. MERRIAM. — CHARLES AND GEORGE C. WINCHESTER. — THE BOSTON CHAIR MANUFACTURING COMPANY. — W. F. WHITNEY. — THE MANUFACTURE OF CHAIRS IN SOUTH ASHBURNHAM. — BURRAGEVILLE. — TUBS AND PAILS. — THREAD SPOOLS. — FRICTION MATCHES. — BASKETS. — MISCELLANEOUS WOOD-WARE. — WOOL CARDING AND CLOTH DRESSING. — COTTON FACTORIES. — TANNING. — MOROCCO BUSINESS. — JOHN AND S. W. PUTNAM.

THE genius of Ashburnham shines forth most conspicuously in a variety of manufactures. In the employment of capital and in the daily toil of a large number of artisans and mechanics, the town maintains a commanding position. The frequent seats of power along the courses of the brooks and rivers have invited the people from the cultivation of a rugged soil to mechanical pursuits. The number of mills, past and present, in this town is unusually large. There are fifty mill sites in this town where at some time the water power has been utilized. These enterprises have offered employment to the mechanic and have augmented the wealth of the town. If the first mills were rude affairs they were necessary to the progress of the settlement, and in their weakness was found a living suggestion of improvement. If brought into comparison with modern mills and modern machinery, the primitive saw-mill, with rheumatic movements laboring



slowly through a log, grunting, meanwhile, as if in pain, presents a vivid picture of the progress and triumph of mechanical skill. No effort is made to name every mill that has been erected in this town. Many of them in the whole extent of an uneven existence have not materially increased the product of the town nor stimulated its energies. Among this class are included several saw-mills upon the smaller streams that, at best, were employed but a small portion of each year and were early suffered to present a picture of dilapidated old age.

The modern industries have been more fortunate and are the life and activity of the town. The first mill in this town was built at Lane Village in 1737. This mill, erected by Hezekiah Gates, during the municipal administration of the proprietors of Dorchester Canada, and in itself a conspicuous figure in the record of the settlement of the town, was mentioned in a previous chapter. In the same connection was given an account of the second mill which was built in 1752 and near the site of the first mill.

The third mill, within the limits of the original township, was also built at an early date. The proprietors located the first and second mills, over which they assumed a nominal control, as near the centre of the town as the conditions would permit. The numerous settlers within and north of the Dutch Farms were far removed from the only mills in the township and caused one to be built in their vicinity previous to 1758. It was owned at that time by Moses Foster, Jr., and Zimri Heywood, and was situated near the outlet of Watatic pond. The site of this mill is now in Ashby and was a part of the substantial contributions of Ashburnham when that town was incorporated. Previous to the Revolution, a saw and grist mill was built at the outlet of Rice pond near the site of the reservoir dam. In the



first division of lots, the eighth lot was one of the ministerial lots and subsequently was under the control of the town. It included the mill privilege and extended southerly. In 1772, for eighteen dollars, the town sold the north part of the lot to Ebenezer Conant, Jr., for a mill site, and for some reason subsequently refunded the money. Mr. Conant, however, built the mill and in 1778 a road was laid from near the village "passing over the mill-dam of Ebenezer Conant, Jr., and between said Conant's house and barn and through lots seven and eight, until it strikes the old road." At the age of forty years, Mr. Conant died August 3, 1783. The mill was afterwards owned by Jonas Randall, Jonathan Brooks and others. About seventy years ago it was removed to Water street.

Philip Oberlock, who assumed the name of Locke, owned a saw-mill at an early date in the south part of the town. It was situated near the shop of Reuben Puffer. In 1778 Mr. Locke sold the mill to Daniel Gibbs who owned it several years. The early proprietors of the mill property, now owned by Elijah Gross and Son, were Simeon Brooks, Caleb Wilder and Jason Mead. In 1816 it was purchased by Peeks Gross. The mill was burned in 1844 and rebuilt the following year. For many years there has been a saw and grain mill at this site. The present proprietors have ground and sold a large quantity of western corn. At times a portion of this mill has been occupied by tenants. Chairs have been made here by Liberty Holt, Charles Buttrick, James Blodget, Ira Brooks and Irving E. Platts. Samuel J. Tenney, William Tenney and Henry Lawrence have manufactured tubs and pails, and John Davis has prepared excelsior at this mill.

Ezra Dana removed to this town about 1790. He did not remain here many years, but he found employment in build-



ing the first mill on the river at Burrageville. The ancient dam and also the evidence of the sudden flood which occurred under his administration still remain. To irrigate a field of corn suffering from a drought, he cut a small channel through the banks enclosing his mill-pond. The treachery of a sandy soil suddenly drained the pond and ruined the corn. No subsequent trace of Dana is found, yet it is more probable that he removed from town than that he was washed away in the sudden current. The second mill in Lane Village, which was built by Caleb Dana and Elisha Coolidge, was removed by Colonel Francis Lane. In 1786 he built a new mill where the upper mill of Packard Brothers now stands. In 1805 he enlarged the building and continued to maintain a saw-mill and a grist-mill until 1822, when he sold the property to John Kibling, and four years later it was purchased by Samuel Foster, who sold it to Enos Emory in 1833. In 1846 Francis Lane, Jr., and his sons became the proprietors, and in 1854 the buildings were renewed. Milton Lane, who had acquired possession, sold it to C. and G. C. Winchester about twenty years ago. Charles F. and Albert D. Packard, the present owners, bought it in 1881.

About forty rods below Packard Brothers' upper mill is an unoccupied mill site. Here Francis Kibling built a mill in 1832. Dr. Stillman Gibson of New Ipswich subsequently owned it until it was removed about thirty years ago. It was occupied as a saw-mill and shingle-mill. On the same stream near Packard Brothers' lower mill is the ancient Gates dam, and near by are found traces of the dam where Francis Lane, Jr., built a saw-mill and turning shop in 1833. In 1846 it was purchased by Enos Emory, and was burned about twenty years ago. The lower mill of Packard Brothers was built by Elias Lane for a turning shop in 1822. It was sold to Eaton and Harris in 1855, who occupied it



about seven years. Passing through several owners it was bought by Packard Brothers in 1874.

If the power of the stream in North Ashburnham was not occupied as early as at Lane Village, forty years ago it was quite thoroughly utilized. There are four mill sites within a short distance and all of them at times have been quite fully employed. The lower one was built and occupied many years by Alvin Ward. It was burned in 1860. The second mill in order of location was owned, and is said to have been built by Moses and Ezra Lawrence. The next owner was Daniels Ellis who held it several years. It was subsequently owned by W. L. G. Ward, and later by Isaac D. Ward. The present owner is Joseph H. Small. The unoccupied mill was built by Deacon John C. and Joseph Davis in the autumn of 1826. It is owned by Isaac D. Ward. The first mill on the fourth privilege was built by Alonzo L. Willard about 1842, and has been occupied in the manufacture of a variety of wares. The successive owners were John Baldwin and Daniels Ellis, Jr. Mr. Ellis removed the original and built the present mill about 1863. He sold it when completed to LaRoy A. Butler. Isaac D. Ward now owns it.

The first mill on the stream flowing from Rindge, in the order of location, was built by Eliphalet Eddy about fifty years ago. About 1845 he was succeeded by Corey, Barrett and Kibling, and later by Jonas Corey. It is now owned and occupied by Robert W. McIntire. Daniels Ellis, Jr., built the next mill on this stream nearly forty years ago. Edwin Hayward has owned it about ten years. The next mill was built by Daniels Ellis, Jr., and was owned several years by Mr. Ellis and Horace W. Houston and later by Mr. Houston. The dam was destroyed by the freshet in the autumn of 1869. Three mills have been erected on the



Whitmore and Jones privilege, and are mentioned in another paragraph. The first mill on the privilege of Leonard Foster was built about the commencement of the present century. It was owned many years by Nathaniel Foster who died in 1826. After a few years it came into the possession of Thomas Bennett, and for many years has been owned by Leonard Foster, who built the present mill about 1850. A large quantity of lumber has been sawed at this mill. Two mills have been burned on this site.

The saw-mill at Burrageville was built and owned many years by George L. Beals and later it was a part of the property of the Burrage Brothers. Later, J. H. and E. L. Hodge owned it several years, and manufactured chairs as well as coarse lumber. For seventeen years it has been owned by C. L. Beals and occupied by George L. Beals, Jr. There have been several saw-mills in the central village, but generally they have been connected with manufacturing establishments and are incidentally mentioned in such connection. A saw-mill was built in 1835, on the site of the chair factory of Wilbur F. Whitney, by Joshua B. Burgess. A few years later Mr. Burgess sold it to Europe H. Fairbanks and Colonel Ivers Phillips, who annually sawed a large quantity of lumber. The subsequent owners were Bailey, Spaulding and Sherwin, who sold it about 1862 to Charles and George C. Winchester. The dam was destroyed by the freshet in 1869 and was not rebuilt until 1882, when Mr. Whitney purchased the premises. On the North Turnpike there have been two saw-mills and one is still standing. They possessed all the requirements for business except water. Failing in this essential requisite they were in operation only a small portion of the time.

Samuel Dunster removed from Mason, New Hampshire, to this town, in 1801, and here found employment for many



years in building, selling and exchanging mills. First, he built a saw-mill and grain-mill at Factory Village, which he sold to Benjamin Gibbs about 1816 and then removed to the central village, where in 1817 he built a grain-mill on the site of the mill of Colonel George H. Barrett and soon after he became interested in other manufacturing enterprises which are mentioned in another connection. Mr. Dunster removed to Factory Village in 1830 and bought the mill of Mr. Gibbs which he continued to own until his death. For many years it was under the care of Elijah and Joel Brooks and at last it was washed away by the freshet. The grain-mill on Mill street has been owned by many individuals and firms. Among them are included Josiah Lane, the Caldwells, Piam Burr, Colonel Charles Barrett, Mirick Stimson, Charles and George C. Winchester, John Hadley, Moses P. and Theodore Greenwood. The present owner, Colonel George H. Barrett, has conducted an extensive business in grinding western corn and in the sale of grain. The present saw-mill and grain-mill at Factory Village was built by Ebenezer Frost in 1855. Mr. Frost sold it in 1866 to Cyrus A. Jefts, Theodore Greenwood and Frank W. Wallace, but the firm was soon succeeded by Mr. Jefts, who is in possession at the present time. The lower mill of Warren E. Marble was built by Jacob Whiteman about 1825. The saw-mill was built by his father, Luke Marble, in 1863. On this stream and at an early date there were two other mills. The first one was built by Henry Hall, a son of the emigrant, immediately after the Revolution. It stood between the two mills of Mr. Marble. After several years, Mr. Hall removed his mill to the outlet of Watatic pond and near his residence. It was not kept in repair many years and no other mill has been erected on the same site. The other mill on the stream falling into Ward pond was built by



Nicholas Whiteman and was subsequently owned by his son Jacob Whiteman. It was burned about 1820. During the past twenty years, Luke Marble and his sons have manufactured a considerable quantity of lumber and chair stock.

CHAIRS. — The monkey for ages has sat upon the ground. In this way he enjoys his rest and consumes his leisure hours in the contemplation of the simplest philosophies. Assuming that the Darwinian theory is correct, there is ample evidence for the conclusion that the progressive development of man and the stages of his civilization and enlightenment have been marked by his use of seats, and by the genius displayed in their design and construction. The chairs of the present, in grace of outline, and in a practical adaptability to the use for which they are designed, are a sure exponent of the progress of the times in the art of mechanism. In this manufacture, both in the number and the value of the annual product, Ashburnham yields the palm to Gardner and surveys the remaining field without a peer. In the early manufacture of chair stock in this town the conditions required only a small room in some part of the dwelling-house, a saw, a frow and a shave, while a foot-lathe introduced the owner to the front rank among the chair makers of that period. The terms of admission to the business were so simple and the outlay of money so small that the number who supplemented their other employment with the manufacture of chairs or chair stock, was only exceeded by the tax list. To make an entire chair was an early ambition of Ashburnham, while to turn a good chair leg was only the simplest inspiration of intuition. Ask the aged man of Ashburnham who were Revolutionary soldiers, and beginning with his father and his uncles he slowly names a few. Ask him who were early Federalists or Orthodox or Methodists and his memory fails. But ask him who were chair makers



when he was young and instantly his eye brightens with the light of returning memories. He becomes loquacious. He counts the names of all he knew, traversing his finger-tips over and over again, and if in the pauses of enumeration the reckless instigator of the proceedings essays to retire, he calls him back and names every son of these chair-making sires.

If not the first to engage in this business, certainly among those who early made the manufacture of chairs an occupation, was John Eaton, a native of Lancaster, who removed to this town in 1805 from Ashby, where he had learned his trade. Here he remained four years when he removed to Royalston. It is said that Enos Jones persuaded Mr. Eaton to locate in Ashburnham, and that he agreed to purchase a stipulated number of chairs. Some of the daughters of Mr. Jones were recently married and others were seriously contemplating a similar event, and in order that he might add a certain number of chairs to the marriage outfit of his daughters, he engaged the services of Mr. Eaton who not only answered the demands of his employer but supplied the wants of other families in the neighborhood. While thus engaged, and possibly to stimulate his business by creating a new demand for his wares, Mr. Eaton married the youngest daughter of his patron. For several years, commencing about 1820, Charles and Deacon John C. Davis, at North Ashburnham, and Charles Munroe at South Ashburnham, were actively engaged in this business. In the course of a few years water power was employed in turning stock and Joshua Burgess, Deacon John C. Glazier, Alvin Ward and, probably, others were engaged in some branches of the business. These pioneers were soon joined by John Conn, Harvey M. Bancroft, Lyman Conant, Thomas E. Glazier, Moses Ross, James Blodget, Joseph Rice, Josiah Eaton,



Jesse Ellis, Sumner May, Hezekiah Matthews, Samuel S. Stevens, and many others. A feature of the business at this time was the sale of turned stock in the lower towns and, in fact, many persons named conducted no other business, and few of them were engaged in the manufacture of finished chairs.

In 1833 Philip R. Merriam began the manufacture of chairs where the extensive factories of the Boston Chair Manufacturing Company now stand. He was also engaged in teaming chairs to Boston and other places and hauling freight of all description. From the little mill and small beginning of Mr. Merriam has been developed an industry which has added fame and wealth to this town. To this date the development of the business had been slow and unproductive of substantial results. Even in sanguine dreams the possibilities of the future had never been suggested. Upon the clumsy methods and tedious processes of the early days the genius which has attended the later years had shed no light. Yet, if slow, the early growth was solid. The foundations were laid in patient toil and upon them the modern structure has been safely reared and supported. At this date, and in a field inviting conquest, Charles and George C. Winchester began an intelligent study of the business. Charles Winchester bought the shop of Philip R. Merriam and, subsequently, joined in the enterprise by the younger brother, an important business was soon established. In the ardor of sanguine temperaments, and the hope and courage of young men, they quickly comprehended a measure, at least, of its future possibilities. At once, rebels against antiquated methods and patrons of every approved innovation, they increased the capacity of their works as rapidly as the profits of the business would permit. With unwearied application they directed their energies to the accomplish-



ment of a defined purpose until the images of their early dreams became material forms. With them in their active days every success was an incentive to renewed conquest. They held every point for which they had contended and fought their way to the foremost rank. To these men the town of Ashburnham is indebted. If the Winchesters have retired from an active participation in the business the fact remains, that it was fostered by them and that it was the force of their genius and energy which ably assisted in assigning to Ashburnham an important position among the manufacturing towns of the Commonwealth. The facts are not at hand nor is it possible to state the details of the growth and magnitude of the business, while under the direction of the Winchesters. They were building and enlarging continually. The record of advancement enlivens the transactions of every year. A few of the dates and a summary of the results are briefly stated.

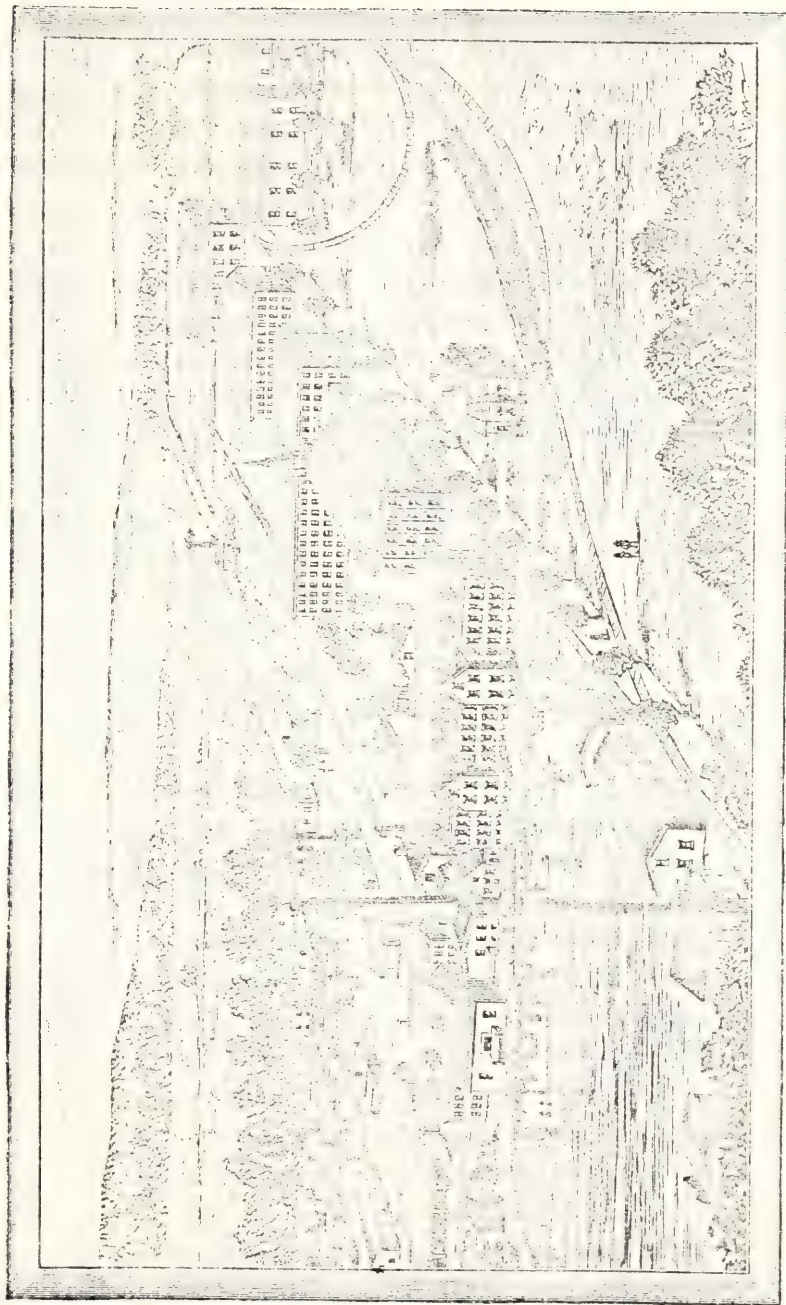
In 1842 the small shop and the business of Mr. Merriam was purchased by Charles Winchester; in 1848 George C. Winchester was admitted to an equal interest in the business. The mills, from time to time, were enlarged to nearly their present capacity and chairs of their manufacture of every style and design were found in every domestic and foreign market. They purchased and erected many tenement houses, and many mills in the surrounding towns were under their control. At the dissolution of the firm in 1870, the number of men employed in the manufacture of chairs was about two hundred and at times this number was considerably exceeded. From 1870 to 1878 the business was continued by George C. Winchester. At the first he assumed the burdens and conducted the enterprise with his accustomed energy, and the volume of the business for several years was fully sustained, but it gradually became apparent that his



brain was overworked and his native forces were failing him. After a few years of partial, and finally of entire, suspension of business, the property was purchased in 1880 by several individuals who organized a stock company.

The value of the plant, exclusive of stock and personal property, is \$75,000. The capital stock is \$150,000. In the manufacture of chairs the corporation owns and occupies thirty-four buildings, having a total flooring of 300,000 feet or about seven acres. The main factory is of wood, four stories, and ground dimensions of 160 by 48 feet; the saw-mill is brick, two stories, 100 by 50 feet; the main paint shop of wood, four stories, is 160 by 40 feet. The works are driven by an engine of 200-horse power and the river rated at 35-horse power is fully utilized. The accompanying illustration faithfully represents the number and the relative location of the buildings. The number of men now employed is 200, beside 100 inmates of the Hampden County House of Correction and as many women and children in this vicinity who are engaged in filling cane chairs. The present annual product is 360,000 chairs, which yield an income from sales of \$200,000. The facilities will accommodate an annual business of \$400,000 and arrangements are maturing to employ every resource at command. With one, and possibly two exceptions, this is the most extensive chair manufactory in New England. In addition to the manufacture of the standard lines, and following a series of successful experiments, this company is now making chairs composed in part, and in some patterns wholly, of bent material. With ingenious appliances the wood is shaped into graceful forms and swiftly directed into circles and all manner of curves. These chairs of many patterns, presenting no right lines or angles, are graceful and attractive in outline, and are admitted to be superior in strength and general appearance





BOSTON CHAIR MANUFACTURING COMPANY.



to the foreign chair from which they have been copied. The process of this manufacture originated in Austria, and skilled mechanics from that country were here employed in perfecting the required machinery and patterns. The present facilities will produce 30,000 chairs of this kind annually and in the markets there is an increasing demand. W. G. Wheel- don, whose office is in Boston, has been treasurer of the company from the date of its incorporation. Luther B. Adams was the manager until 1885 when he was succeeded by F. S. Coolidge.

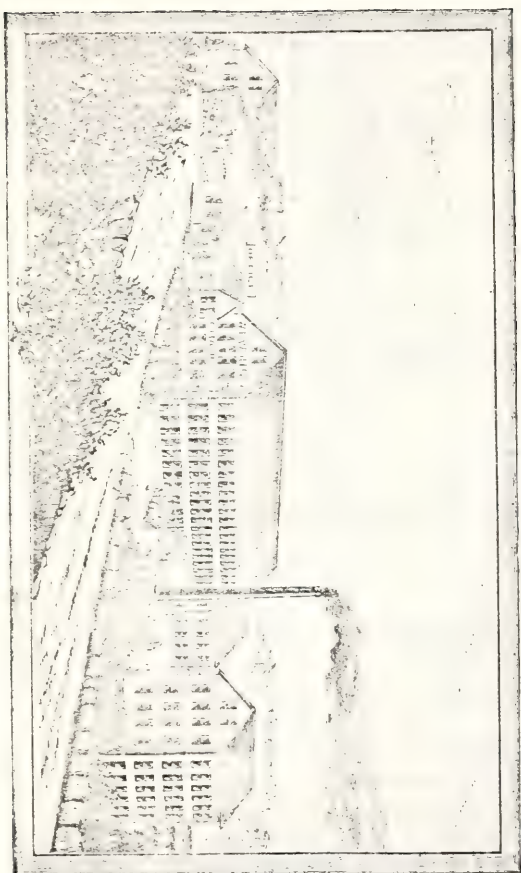
Prominent among the chair manufactories of this town and in this vicinity are the extensive factories of Wilbur F. Whitney at Ashburnham Junction. Mr. Whitney has been schooled in the business from boyhood. He is in the prime and strength of life, yet within his experience all the modern machinery in general use has been tested and approved. In mechanical skill, in a prompt and clear comprehension of the growing demands of the trade and in the adoption of new methods to meet the changing requirements of the business, he has advanced to a prominent position among the manufacturers of the present time. The business was originally established by his father, John Whitney, in Westminster nearly sixty years ago. In 1865 Mr. Whitney purchased an interest in the Glazier mill in South Ashburnham where he was engaged in active business three years. In 1868 he sold his interest in the Glazier mill and bought a mill of Merriam and Allen, situated one-fourth mile east from the depot. Here he remained fourteen years and was successful. A part of the time he was in partnership with Irving E. Platts. Sustaining and constantly enlarging his operations with the profits of the business and with the erection of a new building, he increased the capacity of his works until he gave employment to eighty men and manu-



factured chairs to the amount of \$150,000 annually. In March, 1882, the factory was burned. The loss above insurance was heavy. To build again was an early and for the town a fortunate resolve. Mr. Whitney purchased a site near the depot and immediately erected a factory of three and one-half stories, 136 by 40 feet, and a paint shop 100 by 30 feet. The chairs made in these works are the modern styles of cane-seat chairs. The wood material includes all varieties of native hard wood and black walnut, which is procured in the West. Having built a new mill for its accommodation, 60 by 40 feet, and three stories above the basement, he supplemented his business in 1884 with the manufacture of rattan chairs. In 1886 this factory was enlarged by the addition of fifty feet, and it is now 110 by 40 feet, with a flooring of 17,600 feet. At the present time Mr. Whitney employs 140 men. His manufacture yields an annual product of \$175,000. The full capacity of his factories at prevailing prices is about \$250,000. The rattan, from which the cane for chairs is taken, is a product of Sumatra and the adjacent islands. The improved machinery employed by Mr. Whitney in splitting and shaving the material was made under the patents and is operated under the immediate supervision of George W. Lombard.

Orange Whitney, who occupies the Burgess mills, gives employment to thirty men and manufactures chairs to the amount of \$50,000 annually. Since 1881 he has resided in Winchendon. The first mill on this site in which there was a saw-mill and a grist-mill was built by Joshua B. Burgess in 1844. The building was burned in 1850 and immediately rebuilt. Mr. Burgess was also engaged in the manufacture of chairs. In 1856 he was succeeded by Edward S. Flint, Jonathan H. Piper and James Blodget under the firm of Flint, Piper and Blodget. In 1861 Mr. Flint became





CHAIR FACTORIES OF WILBUR F. WHITNEY.



proprietor of the business which he continued alone and with partners until 1873. Abner White succeeded Mr. Flint and continued the manufacture until 1878. At this time Benjamin E. Wetherbee purchased the property and leased it to Mr. Whitney.

Irving E. Platts has been actively engaged in this manufacture several years. He occupies the Glazier mill and usually employs about fifteen men. There has been a mill upon this site many years. In 1824 Deacon John C. Glazier bought the premises of Charles Munroe and after his death in 1861, the property had several owners and was purchased by Benjamin E. Wetherbee in 1868. The new mill, on the opposite side of the highway, was built in 1872. It is occupied by Mr. Wetherbee in the manufacture of bent chair stock. He gives employment to several men. Another chair shop in South Ashburnham was built in 1856 by Sumner and Charles S. May. They were engaged in the business until recently when the premises were leased to B. Duane & Co., the partners being Bernard Duane and Orange Whitney who manufacture towel racks and cradles.

From about 1837 to 1848 chairs were manufactured on the site of the Naukeag Cotton Factory by several individuals and firms, including James Osgood, Samuel S. Stevens and Alvin Kendall. From thirty to forty years ago, for some reason, nearly every merchant in the central village was also a manufacturer of chairs, and while Corey, Barrett and Kibling were selling staple goods at their store they were making chairs in a mill which stood on the site of the morocco shop.

Burrageville, once the scene of a promising and active enterprise, was founded by chair makers. George S. Burrage, then of Leominster, about 1848, bought of George L. Beals a saw-mill, dwelling-house and a large tract of timber



land. The price paid was thirteen thousand dollars. The saw-mill was burned about that time and rebuilt in its present form and chairs were made in the upper story. The company, including George S., William F. and Charles W. Burrage, was formed, and under the firm name of Burrage Brothers they built in 1853 the paint shop, 40 by 80 feet, which still remains, and the following year a chair factory, 40 by 100 feet, was erected on the stream above the saw-mill. For a number of years the firm was actively engaged in the manufacture of chairs and gave employment to a large number of men. In the mean time they built several tenement houses and were conducting a store in another building which they erected. In the midst of these scenes of activity and promise, in 1858 the chair factory was burned and the enterprise was crippled beyond recovery. William F. Burrage retired from the firm in 1857 and returned to Leominster where he died November 11, 1873. Charles W. Burrage sold his interest to his brother, George S. Burrage, who again became sole owner of the premises in 1859. The younger brother, Charles, completed his studies, which had been interrupted by the allurements of business, and graduated at Yale College 1861, and since that date he has resided in Portland, Oregon. George S. Burrage removed to California where he died May 16, 1876. While residents of this town they were useful and prominent citizens and occupied many positions of trust.

From about 1864 to 1868 a limited business was conducted in the saw-mill by J. H. and E. L. Hodge who came from Templeton. The property was purchased by Charles L. Beals of Winchendon in 1869, and is occupied by George L. Beals, Jr.

TUBS AND PAILS were made in this town a few years, beginning about 1825, by Joshua Townsend. His shop was



on Mill street. The quantity made at this early date did not materially exceed the demands of a limited market. In 1839 Oliver G. Caldwell and Elbridge Stimson began the manufacture on a more extensive scale, which, under successive firms, has been continued to the present time. In 1848 Mr. Stimson sold his interest to William P. Ellis and the firm of O. G. Caldwell & Co. was continued until 1853 when the mill and machinery were purchased by George Rockwood and Addison A. Walker. Mr. Rockwood sold his interest to his son, George G. Rockwood, in 1866, but the name of the firm was not changed. The firm was dissolved by the retirement of Mr. Walker in 1876, and the mill was burned in 1883. Mr. Rockwood purchased the Winchester mill and has continued the manufacture to the present time. The business has been successfully conducted through these many years and is an important feature of the manufactures of this town.

From about 1843 to 1851 this manufacture was conducted by two or three firms which included William Tenney, Samuel J. Tenney and Henry Lawrence. They occupied a part of the mill of E. Gross and Son and were successful. In 1856 Colonel Enoch Whitmore began the manufacture of tubs and continued the business several years.

THREAD SPOOLS were formerly made in this town, and the manufacture was a prominent industry for many years. About 1830 Colonel Enoch Whitmore and Deacon Gilman Jones, under the firm of Whitmore and Jones, built a mill in the northwest part of the town on the western border of the Bellows grant, and established an extensive business in the manufacture of this ware. Their mill was burned in 1840 and another in 1850. The large mill, now unoccupied, was erected in the autumn of 1850 and the business was continued by Colonel Whitmore until his death. The water



power was supplemented by steam and in the last mill there was an engine of forty-horse power and for several years the full capacity of the mill was employed. This manufacture has been controlled of late by the proprietors of the thread mills and has been conducted near the centres of the trade. Nathaniel L. Eaton and Lysander Harris also manufactured spools in the lower mill, now of Packard Brothers, from 1855 to 1862. In 1859 Leonard Foster purchased new machinery and prosecuted this industry with success several years.

FRICTION MATCHES have been made in this town quite extensively. In 1837 William Brooks began the manufacture in North Ashburnham in a small shop built for the purpose and from time to time enlarged the business until a new shop was built for its accommodation. In itself the business of Mr. Brooks was successful, but he became involved in litigations concerning infringements of patents which offset the legitimate income of the enterprise. Mr. Brooks was succeeded by Eliakim T. Russell who continued the manufacture until 1865.

Byam, Carlton & Co. of Boston, for a few years, made a part of their matches in this town. They occupied a shop now owned by Daniels Ellis. Francis Kibling and Daniels Ellis were also engaged in the business. Another industry has been the manufacture of match stock or cards prepared for dipping. Those engaged in this business were Alvin Ward, Leonard Foster, Alonzo L. Willard, Eaton and Harris, Milton Lane and others.

BASKETS have been made by John M. Pratt in South Ashburnham during the past thirty years. His shop, formerly a Methodist parsonage, was moved from Westminster. He has steam power, a trip-hammer and machinery adapted to the business. Formerly, the baskets



for farm and household use were made entirely of ash. Of late, rattan has been used for filling and new patterns of baskets for a variety of uses have been manufactured.

DOORS, SASH AND BLINDS have been manufactured by Reuben Puffer in South Ashburnham. Like all other mills in this town, some parts of it have been used in the manufacture of chairs. In this mill there has been a number of tenants but none of them have conducted a very extensive business.

Miscellaneous wood-ware, not included in the foregoing paragraphs, has been manufactured in this town by Colonel Whitmore, Warren F. Sawtell, Isaac D. Ward, LeRoy Butler, F. H. Rideout, William P. Ellis, Fletcher Brothers, and in 1884 Samuel N. Noyes began the manufacture of toys on Water street, giving employment to ten or twelve men and producing a variety of miscellaneous wares.

WOOL CARDING AND CLOTH DRESSING.—Thomas Park removed to this town in 1779 and about 1790 he built a small mill on the east side of the river and nearly opposite the present site of the blacksmith shop. In this mill he was the first to engage in fulling and dressing the cloth which had been woven in hand looms. He sold in 1800 to Fitch Crosby who conducted a prosperous business until about 1840. This mill was subsequently owned by Horace Black, who was engaged in the manufacture of furniture. It was finally destroyed by the freshet in 1850. Commencing about 1815 Mr. Crosby and Joshua Townsend began wool carding by power. Their cards were in a shop that stood on the site of the morocco shop.

Samuel Dunster, about 1820, built a shop for wool carding where the tub shop of Rockwood and Walker was burned. In this business he was succeeded by Dr. Nathaniel Pierce. Mr. Dunster built another shop for this business, below his



grist-mill, at Factory Village. This building was washed away by the freshet but the cards had not been run for several years previously. In 1825, or about the time carding machines were introduced on Mill street, Joshua, Moses, and Jeremiah Stowell, from Temple, New Hampshire, built a shop on the North Turnpike and began wool carding and spinning. With the aid of hand looms they manufactured broadcloth of a firm texture and substantial character. In this business they were succeeded about 1830 by Charles Stimson.

COTTON FACTORIES. — Cotton spinning by power and the manufacture supplemented by hand looms was begun in this town as early as 1811 or 1812. Samuel Dunster of this town owning three-fourths and Roger Chandler of Mason, New Hampshire, owning one-fourth, were the first to engage in this business. Their mill was at Factory Village. It was subsequently owned by Samuel Barrett, Jewett and Woods and George Blackburn & Co., who purchased it in 1843. The mill was burned in 1846 and a larger mill was built immediately after. The last mill was burned in 1877. The factory on Water street was built by an incorporated company in 1849. The stock was held by residents of this town who, without previous experience in the business, run the mill a few years and until the debt of the corporation was equal to the value of the plant. The mill was sold in 1856 to George Blackburn and Ohio Whitney, Jr. The amount received from this sale paid the indebtedness of the corporation and thirteen cents on one hundred dollars of the capital stock. It will be observed that the corporation could have run the mill about eight hours longer without an assessment. Mr. Whitney continued his interest in the mill and the business about ten years when he sold to George Blackburn & Co., who have continued to the present time.



**TANNERIES.**—Following a custom of the time, the hides of domestic animals were tanned on shares or for stipulated compensation and the leather returned to the owner. The operation of tanning hides and dressing leather consumed time and often the leather fell into the hands of an administrator or the heirs of the original owner of the hides. In all the old New England towns there were numerous little tanneries located near a convenient brook where without machinery of any kind the process was slowly conducted. Mention will be made of some of the old locations where this business was formerly conducted, and if, by any chance, one or more of them have not been discovered in this review of the past no immediate prejudice against the industry of a former generation will be encouraged thereby.

Near the close of the Revolution, Willard Lane commenced this business where now is the residence of Walter O. Parker. He sold in 1797 to Deacon William J. Lawrence who enlarged the facilities and for the time conducted an extensive business.

Captain David Cushing divided his time between tanning and other employments. He lived where Nahum Wood now resides. His vats were north of the house and part of them are now covered by the highway. Levi Adams succeeded Mr. Cushing but soon closed out the business.

Stephen Corey had a yard where George F. Corey now resides and was engaged in tanning a number of years early in the present century. In one of the vats his daughter was drowned. The business was later conducted by Stephen Corey, Jr. On his farm on Russell hill James Adams had several vats and conducted the business a number of years. This farm was subsequently owned and occupied by Joseph Adams.



John Caldwell was also a tanner as well as a farmer. He lived on the farm now of Alden B. Marble and was succeeded by his son, Oliver G. Caldwell. The father and son conducted a limited business about thirty years, commencing early in the present century. The Caldwells were the first in this town to employ water power in grinding bark. Formerly it had been ground in a crude mill turned by a horse which described the same circle many times in the labor of the day. The horse was spoiled for other work and literally died in the harness. So slowly did he move even under the lash, and so gradually did his energies waste away, that it required nice discrimination and keen exercise of a sound judgment to determine with accuracy the precise time to transfer the half-tanned hide from the dying animal to one of the vats.

Fletcher and Warren of Stow once had a yard where the pail shop of George G. Rockwood now stands. The yard was formerly conducted by Deacon William J. Lawrence who was owner of the yard at the foot of Lawrence street. The yard was badly injured and the buildings destroyed by the freshet in 1850 and the business was never resumed on this site.

From 1855 to 1866 Elbridge Stimson conducted the business in the old morocco shop which was recently burned. At the time he was the only tanner in the town and no one has succeeded him.

**THE MOROCCO BUSINESS.**—Thomas Russell began the morocco business in this town about sixty years ago. His shop was on Russell hill in the third school district and opposite the farm of Ward Russell. After about five years, he sold the business to Walter Russell, who was succeeded by Frank Russell and Samuel V. Whitney. In 1852 they removed the business to Water street, occupying the old tan-



nery buildings where the factory of George G. Rockwood now stands. About thirty years ago they erected the building familiarly known as the morocco shop. At this time the business was enlarged, becoming an important factor among the industries of the town. In the new shop they were succeeded by Austin Whitney who with several partners continued the business until the shop was burned in 1882.

Ivers and Thomas Adams were successfully engaged in finishing morocco on Russell hill from 1838 to 1860. In 1833 James Adams built a shop on the site of the mill now of Cyrus A. Jefts. In connection with pulling wool and tanning he finished morocco until he removed in 1849 to Pennsylvania. He was succeeded by Luther B. and Andrew J. Adams. The following year the property was destroyed by the freshet and Luther B. Adams, Elbridge Stimson and Austin Whitney built the shop on Brown brook where they conducted the same business a few years.

Among the possibilities of this town should be mentioned the business and residence here of John and Salmon W. Putnam, who removed from Mason, New Hampshire, in 1837 and commenced business as machinists in the old cotton factory at Factory Village. Here they remained three years when they removed to Fitchburg where they established an important industry which still bears their name and continues to contribute to the fame and wealth of that city.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE ASHBURNHAM LIGHT INFANTRY.

ZEAL IN MILITARY PURSUITS. — EARLY OFFICERS. — THE LIGHT INFANTRY ORGANIZED. — FIRST COMMANDERS. — A FEW VETERANS. — SERVICE IN WAR OF 1812. — THE ROLL. — YEARS OF PROSPERITY. — LIST OF OFFICERS 1791 TO 1847. — PROMOTIONS. — THE MILITIA COMPANY. — MILITIA OFFICERS. — THE DRAFT 1814. — HISTORY FROM 1855 TO 1862. — BRIEF RECORD FROM 1866 TO PRESENT TIME. — LIST OF OFFICERS.

ENTHUSIASM in military affairs for many years succeeding the Revolution was spontaneous. The man of middle age, familiar with the manual of arms and the school of the soldier, was fond of the pomp and display of military pageants. The youth, listening from childhood to the stories of battles and campaigns in which the eloquent narrators had been engaged, were early imbued with a kindred zeal in these pursuits. The old soldier, debarred by the infirmities of age from active participation in the exercises of the field, was ever present with words of encouragement and support. In those days, either in deed or in spirit, all were soldiers. Encouraged by public sentiment and fostered by the laws of the Commonwealth, a military establishment was easily maintained, and in addition to other incentives there was associated with rank and with military titles an acknowledged dignity and honor which firmly appealed to the ambition of men. With such surroundings every military parade was conducted with enthusiasm and was witnessed by a crowd of



applauding people. On these occasions the drum, the fife and the attending juvenile suffered no restraint. The stated trainings and the musters were scenes of bustle and activity in which a Quaker would have been regarded with contempt and supremely pitied in his loneliness.

The town of Ashburnham, eagerly participating in the prevailing sentiment of the times, manifested a lively interest in the local military organizations which for many years were sustained with a steadfast enthusiasm. In addition to all the requirements of the State, an independent military organization has been maintained in this town, almost without interruption, since the Revolution.

In a former chapter it appears that the minute-men of this town were under the command of Captain Jonathan Gates from 1775 to 1781. Upon a reorganization of the militia, the company in this town became known as the seventh company of the Eighth Regiment. July 1, 1781, Francis Lane was commissioned captain, Ebenezer Conant, Jr., first lieutenant, and Daniel Putnam, second lieutenant. Lieutenant Conant died in 1783 and Captain Rand was promoted to major, and to lieutenant-colonel, 1787. In connection with these events, other officers of the Ashburnham company probably were appointed, of which no record has been found. May 2, 1787, Daniel Putnam was commissioned captain, Ebenezer Munroe, lieutenant, and John Abbott, ensign. Lieutenant Munroe and Ensign Abbott were not promoted. These titles became permanently affixed to their names. The next commander of the company probably was Joseph Jewett. No record of his first commission has been discovered, but he was in command of the company in 1789, and about this time John Adams was an ensign and a lieutenant.



Until a later date there was only one company of militia in this town, and, until 1791, it does not appear that the company organization was privileged or distinguished from any other militia company organized under the general laws of the State. But in June, 1791, the General Court granted the petition of the military men of this town, presented by General Timothy Newell, and under the rights and privileges thus secured the Ashburnham Light Infantry was promptly organized. Its legal existence properly dates from the issue of the first commissions to its officers, July 13, 1791. The petition and the proceedings of the General Court were as follows :

TO THE HONOURABLE, THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IN GENERAL COURT ASSEMBLED :

The petition of Timothy Newell Major General of the seventh division of Militia in said Commonwealth humbly sheweth : —

That a number of persons, in the town of Ashburnham in the 4<sup>th</sup> Regiment in the 2<sup>d</sup> Brigade of said Division, did (when under the command of the Hon.<sup>ble</sup> Maj.<sup>r</sup> Gen.<sup>l</sup> Warner) agree to form themselves into a Company of Light Infantry and as doubts have arisen whether said persons can be formed into any other than an independent company and as it is not the wish of said persons to be thus established, your petitioner therefore prays that liberty be granted to raise a Company of Light Infantry within the aforesaid Regiment to be considered as a Company of Regimental Light Infantry under the command of the Colonel or Commanding officer of said Regiment.

The foregoing petition was presented June 18, 1791, and in response the Legislature passed the following resolve :

*Resolved*, That His Excellency the Governor be and he is hereby empowered and requested to issue orders for forming a Company of Light Infantry in the town of Ashburnham, provided they do not reduce the standing company of militia in said town



to a less number than sixty privates of the train band; the officers of said Light Infantry company to be appointed and commissioned in the same way and manner as is provided by law for the appointing and commissioning other military officers. Said company when so formed to be under the command of the Colonel or commanding officer of the fourth regiment of the second brigade in said division.

Under the privileges extended by this proceeding the Ashburnham Light Infantry was promptly organized. The first officers, commissioned July 13, 1791, were Joseph Jewett, captain, Caleb Kendall, lieutenant, and Charles Hastings, ensign. The following year Captain Jewett was promoted to major, and Charles Hastings was commissioned captain, August 27, 1792, and consequently was the second commander of the company.

Concerning the names or the number of men who belonged to the company during the first twenty years of its legal existence there is no complete record. Beginning with the command of Ivers Jewett in 1813 the Ashburnham Light Infantry entered upon an era of prosperity. A book of enlistments, containing the names of all who were members of the company in 1813, with dates of original enlistment and the names of all who enlisted from that date to 1845, is carefully preserved in the archives of the company. At the close of the year 1813, the number of rank and file, including non-commissioned officers and musicians, was fifty men. The only original member of the company was James Laws, Jr., of Westminster, who enlisted first in the militia in April, 1789, two years before the company was organized under permission of the Legislature. The next in duration of service was Joseph F. Burgess who joined in 1796, and following with a record of seven years or more of service are the names of Joseph Miller, Jonas Holden, John Gates, Jr.,



Jacob Ward, James Adams, Ebenezer Munroe, Jr., Charles Munroe, John Hastings, Ebenezer Adams, Ivers Jewett, Walter R. Adams, Timothy Crebore, Jr., Dickerson Brooks and Jonathan Samson, Jr. Including the existing company in 1813 and the subsequent enlistments to 1845, the record contains three hundred and ninety-eight names.

The obligation to which each recruit subscribed, copied on the first page of the book of enlistment by the hand of Ivers Jewett, is probably a copy of the obligation adopted in 1791. It is here transcribed and will be familiar to many now living :

To facilitate the performance of the duty, which we owe to our country, of adding to our character as citizens some portion of the skill of the soldier, to increase our usefulness as militia men by adding to the zeal which is excited by patriotism, the ardor which is inspired by emulation and to give to each one of us who exerting himself for his own and his State's defence that confidence in the zealous and skilful coöperation of each other which can result only in military discipline ; We do hereby, agreeable to a resolve from the General Court of this Commonwealth, passed June the eighteenth, A. D. seventeen hundred and ninety-one for the raising of a Light Infantry company in the town of Ashburnham, voluntarily enlist as members of the Ashburnham Light Infantry company and to govern us in the pursuit of these objects we agree to equip ourselves according to the laws of this Commonwealth, to uniform according to the uniform of said company, which is per according to the clerk's book, and to submit to the rules and regulations of said company. All of which we pledge our honors to perform.

In the war of 1812, the Ashburnham Light Infantry was held in a state of suspense through the summer of 1813 and a part of the following year. The indifference of Massachusetts to the prosecution of the war is a part of the general



history of the times. So far as individual opinion was concerned the general sentiment of the town was in support of the position of Governor Strong. But the spirit of the soldier arose in triumph over the prevailing sentiment of the town. During the progress of the war, the company was frequently disciplined in the exercise of arms and expectantly awaited the summons to march.

During the summer of 1814 the presence of an unusual number of the armed vessels of the enemy caused frequent and grave alarm on the sea-coast. At this time several regiments of State militia were called out and were stationed in Boston and vicinity. The Ashburnham Light Infantry was ordered into the service early in the month of September. There are several now living who remember the hurried preparation and departure from this town. It was on the Sabbath. The company assembled at the Jewett store and after brief words of counsel and fervent prayer for their safe return by Rev. Dr. Cushing, the arms, ammunition and equipage were on a long line of wagons hastily engaged for the occasion. The soldiers were in uniform but in the general features of the day there was only a faint suggestion of a military demonstration. The highway was filled with vehicles of all descriptions which were employed to transport the army on its way. The wagons were unloaded at Lancaster. The men were ordered under arms and they proceeded on their way in a more warlike demonstration. They arrived in due time at Boston and were mustered into the service September 9. The company was stationed at South Boston and Dorchester fifty-one days and was discharged October 30, 1814. Soon after their safe return to their homes, Rev. Dr. Cushing preached a sermon addressed particularly to the soldiers, congratulating them and the public on the prospect of peace. The sermon contains some



wholesome advice. "Let me caution you to take heed that you rejoice without infringing upon the rules of temperance. The pleasure of this day is marred if anything takes place inconsistent with your characters as men and Christians."

The following is the roll of the company at this time. The three last names were enrolled a few days before the company was ordered into service. The remaining names are transcribed from the official roll at the annual inspection in May preceding. Four of the company — James Laws, Jr., Jonas Holden, Joseph Polley and Adam Butler — were residents of Westminster.

Ivers Jewett, *Captain*

Timothy Crehore, *Lieu'enant*

Walter R. Adams, *Ensign*

Ebenezer Adams, <i>Sergeant</i>	Stephen Marble
John Gates, Jr., "	Joseph Rice
Reuben Townsend, Jr., "	Joseph Townsend
Elijah Brooks, "	Ephraim Taylor
James Adams, <i>Fifer</i>	Jonas Holden
Benjamin Barrett, "	Humphrey Harris
Oliver Barrett, <i>Drummer</i>	Henry Gipson
Amos Stone, "	Joel Marble
Laban Cushing, "	George Wilker, Jr.
Jonathan Samson, Jr.	Adam Butler
Josiah White	Thomas Howard
Reuben Rice, Jr.	Charles Stimson
Luther Bigelow	Asahel Corey
Joseph F. Burgess	Caleb Willard
James Billings	Elisha Garfield
Ebenezer Flint	Elias Blodgett
James Laws, Jr.	Enoch Whitmore
Charles Munroe	Charles Barrett
Ebenezer Munroe, Jr.	Asia Phillips
Joseph Miller	Dickerson Brooks



Edward Maynard

Joseph Polley

Jacob Ward

Stephen Adams

John Hastings

Reuben Stimson

Heman Harris

Jabez Marble

For many years succeeding the war of 1812 the independent company was maintained with full ranks. In proficiency of drill and standard of discipline it was among the first companies of the regiment. The officers were frequently promoted to command of the regiment and the citizens of the town evinced a reasonable pride in the organization. In the progress of years the military spirit was suffered to decline, the laws of the State were frequently amended and proffered a diminishing support and encouragement in the maintenance of a military organization. In an hour of despondency the company appealed to the town for assistance, but in this direction they were met with a cold refusal. In 1838 a proposition to make a small appropriation for the benefit of the company and another to loan them a small amount of money, were promptly denied. The sentiment of indifference which pervaded the community as a natural consequence was disseminated among the ranks of the company. From about 1845, the record is gloomy and often overcast with inactivity, but the company maintained a legal existence and occasionally manifested a spasmodic effort at resuscitation until December 1, 1851, when the remaining officers were officially discharged. From that date until 1855, the company remained beneath the surface. The last captain was Nathaniel F. Cutter who resigned November 14, 1846, and no successor was commissioned. Lieutenant Clarence M. Proctor remained lieutenant commanding until, as stated, December 1, 1851. In the mean time orders for the choice of officers were issued, and in 1847 Colonel



Francis J. Barrett was chosen captain, but he declined to qualify and assume command of the company.

From 1791 to 1851 the following officers of the Ashburnham Light Infantry have been commissioned. The absence of a date in connection with a very few of the names indicates that no official record of the commission has been found, yet no name has been admitted without ample proof of service in the capacity indicated.

CAPTAINS.		LIEUTENANTS.		ENSIGNS.	
Joseph Jewett,	1791	Caleb Kendall,	1791	Charles Hastings,	1791
Charles Hastings,	1792	Willard Lane,	1792	John Scollay,	1792
Willard Lane,	1795	John Scollay,	1795	Phinehas Randall,	1795
John Scollay,	1797	Phinehas Randall,	1797	Silas Willard,	
Phinehas Randall,		Silas Willard,	1798	Grovener Scollay,	1802
Silas Willard,	1799	Grovener Scollay,	1805	Henry Willard,	1805
Caleb Wilder,	1805	Henry Willard,	1807	Moses Lawrence,	1807
Grovener Scollay,		Ivers Jewett,	1811	Samuel Gates,	1810
Henry Willard,		Timothy Crehore, Jr.	1813	Walter R. Adams,	1813
Moses Lawrence,	1810	Ebenezer Adams,	1815	John Gates, Jr.,	1815
Ivers Jewett,	1813	Charles Barrett,	1817	John Willard, Jr.,	1817
Timothy Crehore, Jr.	1815	John Willard, Jr.,	1820	Joseph Rice,	1820
Ebenezer Adams,	1817	Joseph Rice,	1822	Reuben Rice,	1822
Hosea Stone,	1818	Enoch Whitmore,	1824	Samuel Foster,	1826
Charles Barrett,	1820	Reuben Rice,	1826	Gilman Jones,	1827
John Willard, Jr.,	1823	Samuel Foster,	1827	Emery Rice,	1828
Joseph Rice,	1824	Gilman Jones,	1828	Asa Merriam,	1830
Reuben Rice,	1827	Emery Rice,	1830	Lewis G. Houghton,	1831
Samuel Foster,	1828	Asa Merriam,	1831	George Woods,	1832
Emery Rice,	1831	Lewis G. Houghton,	1832	Alvin Kendall,	1834
Asa Merriam,	1832	Asahel Corey,	1833	Henry Kibling, Jr.,	1837
Kilburn Harwood,	1833	John W. Mossman,	1838	Asahel Wheeler,	1838
Alvin Kendall,		Asahel Wheeler,	1841	Francis J. Barrett,	1841
Henry Kibling, Jr.,	1838	Jonas Corey,	1844	Jonas Corey,	1841
John W. Mossman,	1841	Nathaniel F. Cutter,	1845	Nathaniel F. Cutter,	1844
Asahel Wheeler,	1844	Clarence M. Proctor,	1846	Clarence M. Proctor,	1845
Jonas Corey,	1845			Alonzo P. Davis,	1846
Nathaniel F. Cutter,	1846				

During the last five years of this period there were more than two lieutenants. After 1841 there was a third lieutenant and the officers who held this commission were Nathaniel F. Cutter, 1841-44; Clarence M. Proctor, 1844-45; Alonzo P. Davis, 1845-46; Joseph P. Rice, 1846-51. The only fourth lieutenant was Samuel V. Whit-



ney who was in commission from 1846 to 1851. From the officers of the Ashburnham Light Infantry, there were many promotions in the service.

Colonel Joseph Jewett was commissioned major, June 28, 1792, and lieutenant-colonel, April 13, 1795. General Ivers Jewett, major, April 24, 1815; lieutenant-colonel, June 20, 1816; colonel, August 12, 1817; brigadier-general, May 11, 1819; major-general, June 10, 1822; resigned, May 30, 1826. Colonel Timothy Crehore, Jr., major, August 12, 1817; lieutenant-colonel, May 7, 1818; colonel, June 28, 1819. Colonel Hosea Stone, major, March 23, 1820; lieutenant-colonel, March 19, 1822. Colonel Charles Barrett, major, March 19, 1822; lieutenant-colonel, April 15, 1822; colonel, March 2, 1824. Colonel Enoch Whitmore promoted from lieutenant to major, July 1, 1826; lieutenant-colonel, July 23, 1827; colonel, August 31, 1829. Colonel Kilburn Harwood, major, May 13, 1837, and colonel, July 24, 1841. Colonel Francis J. Barrett promoted from ensign and adjutant to major, August 20, 1842; lieutenant-colonel, September 2, 1843; colonel, August 6, 1844; resigned, February 26, 1846.

It will be remembered that in the resolve of the General Court creating the Ashburnham Light Infantry, there was a provision that from the men in this town liable to perform military duty, sixty or more should be reserved for a militia company under the general laws of the State. This service, upon those not legally exempt, was compulsory, yet for many years it was rendered with apparent alacrity. The company of militia was continued and it maintained a visible organization until the annual trainings and musters were abolished. The officers of the militia company from 1792 to 1834 were as follows:



CAPTAINS.	LIEUTENANTS.	ENSIGNS.
Jonathan Merriam, 1792	Isaac Whitmore, 1792	Henry Whiteman, 1792
Silas Whitney, 1795	Ebenezer T. Adams, 1795	John Adams, Jr., 1795
Ebenezer T. Adams, 1799	Henry Kiblinger, 1797	John Willard, Jr., 1797
Henry Kiblinger, 1801	Nathaniel Foster, 1799	Nathaniel Foster, 1798
John Willard, 1802	Caleb Wilder, 1802	Samuel Cotting, 1799
Samuel Cotting, 1803	Silas Whitney, 1803	Ithamer Fairbanks, 1803
George R. Cushing, 1807	Ithamer Fairbanks, 1805	Lemuel Whitney, 1808
Philander J. Willard, 1811	Philander J. Willard, 1809	Elias Lane, 1813
Lemuel Whitney, 1813	Lemuel Whitney, 1811	Timothy Stearns, 1814
Jacob Fairbanks, 1814	Elias Lane, 1814	Francis Lane, Jr., 1816
Elias Lane, 1816	Timothy Stearns, 1816	Charles Stearns, 1818
Timothy Stearns, 1818	Francis Lane, Jr., 1818	Jonas Munroe, 1821
Francis Lane, Jr., 1821	Benjamin Gibbs, 1821	John C. Davis, 1822
Benjamin Gibbs, 1822	Jonas Munroe, 1822	Jehiel Watkins, 1824
Jonas Munroe, 1824	John C. Davis, 1824	Henry Kibling, Jr., 1826
John C. Davis, 1826	Jehiel Watkins, 1826	John Leathers, 1827
Jehiel Watkins, 1827	Henry Kibling, Jr., 1827	Charles Davis, 1828
Henry Kibling, Jr., 1828	Jonas Nutting, Jr., 1828	Josiah L. Wetherbee, 1830
Jonas Nutting, Jr., 1830	Charles Davis, 1830	
Asa Merriam, 1832	Josiah L. Wetherbee, 1833	
Josiah L. Wetherbee, 1834		

In 1814 this company, then under the command of Captain Jacob Fairbanks, contained seventy men, including officers. In the summer of this year a draft of two men was made. Tradition asserts that the lot fell on Deacon William J. Lawrence and Thomas Hobart. Both of these men were Federalists and opposed to the prosecution of the war and the administration party greatly rejoiced over the result. In regard to Deacon Lawrence the tradition is correct. He was drafted at this time and furnished a substitute, but the name of Thomas Hobart does not appear on the roll of the company. Jesse Ellis was the other man drafted and Henry Whiteman was his substitute. From this company Colonel Benjamin Gibbs was promoted to major, March 2, 1824, and to lieutenant-colonel, March 2, 1825. Colonel Jehiel Watkins was promoted to major, August 7, 1841; to lieutenant-colonel, September 6, 1841, and to colonel, September 2, 1843. Among the regimental officers several were adjutants. Dr. Abraham Lowe was appointed regimental



surgeon, October 3, 1805; Dr. Abraham T. Lowe, surgeon's mate, March 24, 1821, and Melzer Hudson was appointed quartermaster, July 5, 1797.

The Ashburnham Light Infantry did not long remain beneath the surface. The second epoch of its history extends from 1855 to 1862. If it faded from existence through the tardy processes of disintegration it sprang into life with spontaneous and vigorous animation. The slumbering military spirit was swiftly kindled into flame. The occasion was found in a Fourth of July celebration at Fitchburg in 1855. The reviving sentiment of the town invited Captain Henry Kibling to call together the remaining members of the company and to fill the ranks with new recruits. The men were drilled and participated in the celebration with credit to themselves and to the town. The spirit of former years was fully aroused. The company was reorganized and continued in a flourishing condition until the war of the Rebellion. A conspicuous record of service in the field is continued in another chapter. Under authority of the following general order the old company was revived:

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

HEAD QUARTERS, BOSTON, July 13, 1855.

Special Order No. 30.

WHEREAS, Alonzo P. Davis and fifty-eight others of Ashburnham have petitioned His Excellency the Governor and Commander-in-Chief for liberty to organize a company of Infantry in the town of Ashburnham and vicinity,

The Commander-in-Chief grants the prayer thereof and directs that orders be issued for the choice of officers immediately; the notification thereof be addressed to Alonzo P. Davis of Ashburnham.

The Commander-in-Chief further orders that when said Company is organized it be known as Company G, Ninth Regiment of



Infantry. Upon the application of the Captain when duly qualified, and a certificate from the Selectmen of Ashburnham that they have provided a suitable armory, the arms and equipments will be furnished by the Adjutant-General.

By command of His Excellency,

HENRY J. GARDNER,

Governor and Commander-in-Chief.

EBENEZER W. STONE,

Adjutant-General.

The company promptly organized with Joseph P. Rice, captain, and four lieutenants. This number of officers was continued until 1861. The number of men on the company roll at the close of the year was sixty-five, nearly all of whom enlisted immediately after the order and before the choice of officers.

The petitioners met in the Town Hall July 26, 1855, and completed an organization. At this time the regulations prescribed four lieutenants for the company. The officers chosen at this time were commissioned under same date as follows:

Captain, Joseph P. Rice; First Lieutenant, Addison A. Walker; Second Lieutenant, Jonas Morse; Third Lieutenant, Alonzo P. Davis; Fourth Lieutenant, George H. Barrett. Fifty-five men were included in the original enlistment and eleven were added immediately after the organization. With full ranks and ably commanded, the company attended the division muster at West Brookfield in September. At this date Colonel Edwin Upton of Fitchburg was in command of the regiment. From 1855 to 1861, it was known as Company G of the Tenth Regiment, and until all companies of militia were depleted by individual enlistments in the service, the Ashburnham Light Infantry was in a prosperous condition and was maintained with full



ranks. The whole number of enlistments from the date of reorganization to April, 1861, was one hundred and forty-three. After this date many members of the company entered the service and a large number joined the company, but they were enlisted for service in the army, rather than as members of a local company of militia. During this period there were few changes in the officers. Late in December of the same year Jonas Morse resigned. Lieutenants Davis and Barrett were promoted and Silas Nims was commissioned fourth lieutenant, February 28, 1857. At the promotion of Captain Rice Lieutenant Walker was commissioned captain, August 11, 1860. Lieutenants Davis and Barrett were promoted May 7, 1860. Lieutenant Nims resigned and Samuel A. Taylor was commissioned third lieutenant, and James W. Gardner, fourth lieutenant, June 15, 1860. On the occasion of the resignation of First Lieutenant Walker in March, the company was under command of Lieutenant Davis from June to August, 1860. Colonel Joseph P. Rice was promoted to colonel, June 19, 1860. On his staff Dr. Alfred Miller was surgeon and Marshall Wetherbee was quartermaster.

At the close of the war the independent organization in this town was revived. Many of those who were members before the war desired the establishment of the old company and a greater number who had served in the war eagerly seized a favorable opportunity to continue in this manner the companionship and association of arms. Early in the year 1866, the contemplated movement was earnestly forwarded and in response to a petition numerously signed the decisive order was issued August 11, 1866.

Special Order, No. 99.

Asahel Wheeler and fifty-nine others of Ashburnham, having forwarded to the Adjutant-General a roll of enlistment for the



Volunteer Militia of the Commonwealth, agreeably to the laws of this Commonwealth governing and regulating the militia,

It is ordered that a company be organized of the men thus enlisted and that a captain and one first lieutenant and one second lieutenant be immediately chosen. The order to assemble the men for the election will be directed to Asabel Wheeler of Ashburnham who will furnish the presiding officer with an attested copy of the enlistment roll previous to the meeting.

The chairman of the board of Selectmen of Ashburnham will preside at the election. The company when organized will be designated and known as Company E, First Battalion Infantry, M. V. M.

By order of the Commander-in-Chief.

WILLIAM SCHOULER,

Adjutant-General.

The company was promptly organized and the commissions of the first officers bear date of September 3, 1866. The past twenty years have been an era of prosperity. The organization owns the armory which was purchased 1883, and have camp property valued at about three hundred dollars. The present number of men, including officers, is fifty-eight, and sustained by public sentiment the future of the company is secure.

Soon after the reorganization of the company in 1866, with unqualified unanimity of sentiment and in memory of the gallant Colonel Joseph P. Rice, the organization assumed the name of THE RICE GUARDS. The official designation is Company E. From 1866 to 1869, the company composed a part of the first battalion, first brigade, and first division; from 1869 to 1878, the company was in the Tenth Regiment, third brigade; and since the reorganization of the militia, December 3, 1878, the company has formed a part of the Sixth Regiment of infantry in the first brigade. The officers



of Company E, and the date of commission, from 1866 to the present time, are given as follows :

CAPTAINS.	FIRST LIEUTENANTS.	SECOND LIEUTENANTS.
Asahel Wheeler, 1866	George E. Davis, 1866	Harrison C. Cheney, 1866
George E. Davis, 1868	Samuel C. Lesure, 1867	Samuel C. Lesure, 1867
William H. Lindley, 1871	George E. Davis, 1868	James M. Garnet, 1867
Walter O. Parker, 1872	William H. Lindley, 1868	George E. Davis, 1868
Josiah W. Bride, 1879	Walter O. Parker, 1871	Leander W. Libby, 1868
Walter H. Laws, 1882	Eugene A. Puffer, 1872	Harrison C. Cheney, 1869
Charles H. Pratt, 1885	C. Edgar Willard, 1874	Michael FitzGibbon, 1870
	Josiah W. Bride, 1875	John H. Stoddard, 1872
	Walter H. Laws, 1880	C. Edgar Willard, 1874
	Charles H. Pratt, 1882	Daniel F. Ryan, 1874
	Alvah S. Fullford, 1885	Lucius R. Hodgman, 1876
		Charles H. Pratt, 1880
		Alvah S. Fullford, 1882
		Charles H. White, 1885

Major Josiah W. Bride was commissioned major, February 7, 1882 ; resigned March 25, 1884.



## CHAPTER XIX.

### WAR OF THE REBELLION.

PREPARED FOR WAR. — MISSION OF THE ASHBURNHAM LIGHT INFANTRY. —  
EARLY ENLISTMENTS. — SECOND REGIMENT. — THE HOME COMPANY. —  
THE UNIFORM. — LIBERALITY OF GEORGE C. WINCHESTER. — STATE AID.  
— TWENTY-FIRST REGIMENT. — ITS RECORD. — NAMES OF MEN IN THIS  
SERVICE. — COLONEL JOSEPH P. RICE. — CAPTAIN WALKER AND THE  
SLAVERY PROBLEM. — OTHER ENLISTMENTS IN 1861. — RECORD OF 1862.  
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DRAFT. — ENLISTMENTS. — THE SECOND DRAFT. — CONCLUSION.

MASSACHUSETTS, for many years preceding the War of the Rebellion, had occupied an advanced position among the Northern States in the maintenance of an organized and disciplined militia. At the first call for men to suppress the Rebellion, no State responded with less delay. The regiments from this State were not only early in the field, but they entered the service in a better state of discipline than was a majority of the army hastily gathered at Washington. In these measures of military preparation the town of Ashburnham maintained a foremost rank, and during the early progress of the war the influence and the mission of the Ashburnham Light Infantry was clearly revealed. The military spirit fostered by the organization, joined by a stronger force in the patriotic impulse of the people, was represented by over eighty men from this town in the army during the first eight months of the war. To present the names of the volunteers from this town, with the date of



enlistment, the regiment and duration of service and a record of casualties and disability, will be the province of this chapter. A faithful account of the service of each soldier would fill a volume.

In the spring of 1861, the Ashburnham Light Infantry, under the command of Captain Addison A. Walker, was in a good state of discipline and promptly tendered service to the governor as an organization. The disciplined companies were held in reserve by the State authorities to be distributed among the regiments that were soon to be recruited. For this reason the company from this town was not called into the service until the Twenty-first Regiment was organized. This delay, complimentary in itself to the company, was the prolific source of embarrassment, and several men impatient of delay enlisted in other organizations.

Joseph H. Whitney, George P. Nutting and Martin V. B. Grimes enlisted May 22, 1861, in Company A, Fourth Regiment, and were discharged at expiration of term of service in July of the same year.

The Second Regiment was mustered, for three years, May 25, 1861, and by reënlistment was continued in the service until July 14, 1865. In this regiment, which rendered gallant service in Virginia, participating in the historic battles of that State, and later formed a part of General Sherman's army in the grand march to the sea, Ashburnham was represented by six men: Charles H. Heald was promoted to second lieutenant, July 3, 1865; Sergeant Allen A. Nutting was killed June 9, 1863, at Beverly Ford, Virginia; Harvey A. Cheney was discharged September 13, 1861; Benjamin F. Fay was killed at Cedar Mountain, Virginia, August 9, 1862; Charles W. Kendall was transferred August 6, 1863, to the Veteran Reserve Corps, and Augustus McIntosh was discharged with the regiment after four years of service in July, 1865.



In the Fifteenth Regiment there were two original enlistments from this town. They were mustered July 12, 1861. Their record is as follows: John K. Walker was killed at Ball's Bluff, Virginia, October 21, 1861, and Robert J. Elliot was transferred to the regular army, September 24, 1862.

In the Sixteenth Regiment was Patrick McCoolif who enlisted July 2, 1861, and completed three years of service.

In the Twentieth Regiment was Francis Sacket who was discharged on account of disability, a month after his enlistment.

John Finan enlisted in First Regiment of Cavalry in September, and was discharged on account of wounds in February, 1863.

During the early months of the war, and while the soldiers already named were enlisting into the service, the thought of the people and the action of the town related more particularly to the home company which was momentarily expecting a summons to march. In a town meeting held at this time it was voted to raise the sum of eight hundred dollars to procure a uniform for the company, and a short time after an additional sum of six hundred dollars was appropriated for this purpose. The material was purchased, a tailor was employed and a hundred women of Ashburnham promptly volunteered to assist in making the military suits. This action of the town, prompted by a generous impulse, was of little benefit to the company. When the men were called into service they were required to uniform in accordance with the regulations of the army.

The generosity of the town was unappeased with this act for the comfort and appearance of the soldier. The enthusiastic liberality of George C. Winchester furnished each member of the company with a knife of offensive and



defensive proportions and several of them are still preserved among the treasured relics of the war. There was considerable talk of procuring a revolver for each man of the company, and indeed, suggested by emphatic votes passed at an informal meeting of the citizens, a large number was purchased before it became apparent that a military company could not enter the field of active service in the capacity of a movable arsenal. One revolver was finally presented to each officer and the remainder was sold. In this proceeding the town in its corporate capacity took no part except to express an emphatic dissent; but with greater wisdom and a more attentive regard for the future necessities of all concerned, the selectmen were instructed to provide for the needy families of the men in the service. During the continued progress of the war, this proposal was faithfully executed and large sums of money from the treasury of the town and of the State were expended in the relief of the families of the soldiers.

The Twenty-first Regiment was recruited in July and August, 1861. Company G of this regiment, composed largely of men from this town, entered Camp Lincoln in Worcester, July 19, and with the regiment left for the seat of war August 23. The record of this gallant regiment is a prominent feature of the reports of the Adjutant-General and its history has been published in an interesting and authentic narrative by Captain Charles F. Walcott. The regiment was assigned to the Burnside expedition to North Carolina and there participated in the battles of Roanoke, Newbern and Camden. In the summer and autumn of 1862 they participated in the campaign in Virginia and there inscribed on their colors the sanguinary lines of Manassas, Chantilly, South Mountain, Antietam and Fredericksburg. The casualties in these engagements will be noted with the



several individual records. In the spring of 1863 the regiment rendered efficient service in Tennessee and in this campaign the battles of Blue Springs and Campbell's Station and the siege of Knoxville were inscribed on their banners.

About the time General Grant assumed command of the armies of the United States, the regiment joined the army of Virginia and shared the arduous service and honors of that decisive campaign. In August, 1864, at the expiration of the term of service, those who had not reenlisted were honorably discharged and the veterans who had engaged to serve during the war were transferred to the Thirty-sixth and subsequently to the Fifty-sixth Regiment. They remained with the army in Virginia and shared the glory of the capitulation of the rebel army.

The following list contains the names of the men from Ashburnham who served in the Twenty-first Regiment. Nearly all of them were members of the Ashburnham Light Infantry, were mustered into the service in July, 1861, and were members of Company G.

Captain Addison A. Walker, the senior captain of the regiment, was the commander of the Light Infantry at the beginning of the war. To the governor he promptly tendered the service of a disciplined and efficient company. In January, 1862, the regiment sailed for North Carolina. Captain Walker, on account of sickness, was left at Annapolis. Subsequently he was detailed on recruiting service for several months. He then joined the regiment at Newbern, North Carolina, but being detailed on special service he could not be assigned to the command of his company. At this time General Burnside tendered him a position on his staff, but impatient at the restraints and embarrassments of the situation he resigned May 13, 1862. From the first he enjoyed the respect of his men and the confidence of his superior officers.



First Lieutenant Alonzo P. Davis was a veteran in the Light Infantry, of which he had been an officer several years. He resigned in January, 1862.

Second Lieutenant Samuel A. Taylor was promoted first lieutenant, January 24, 1862; captain, May 28, 1862; resigned, January 13, 1863. He was subsequently a second lieutenant in the Fourth Heavy Artillery.

Sergeant Asabel Wheeler was promoted second lieutenant, January 24, 1862; first lieutenant, May 28, 1862; captain, January 14, 1863; resigned, April 25, 1863. He was subsequently a captain in the Sixty-first Regiment.

Sergeant Charles H. Parker promoted first lieutenant, May 28, 1862; resigned, March 2, 1863. Wounded severely while in command of the company at the battle of Antietam, September 17, 1862.

Corporal George E. Davis was an adjutant and sergeant-major; promoted first lieutenant, April 26, 1863; he reënlisted and was honorably discharged, August 30, 1864, at the reduction of the regiment.

Sergeant Joseph H. Whitney promoted to sergeant-major, July 21, 1862, and second lieutenant, October 30, 1862; resigned, February 23, 1863.

Sergeant Samuel C. Lesure reënlisted, and in a reorganization of the regiment was discharged as a supernumerary, September 24, 1864.

Sergeant M. Thomas Russell was discharged on account of disability, May 8, 1862.

Corporal Lorenzo H. Gilbert promoted first sergeant, January 2, 1864; reënlisted and was honorably discharged, September 24, 1864. He was wounded in the service.

Corporal Harrison C. Cheney promoted sergeant and acting sergeant-major and discharged at expiration of term of service, August 30, 1864.



Corporal Charles G. Lawrence reenlisted; was wounded at Spottsylvania, May 12, 1864.

Corporal Charles Henry Puffer reenlisted; was promoted to sergeant and killed at Spottsylvania, May 12, 1864.

Corporal Henry H. Martindale reenlisted.

George F. Puffer promoted corporal and sergeant; reenlisted and was honorably discharged, September 24, 1864.

Jonas W. Dwinnell promoted to corporal and discharged on account of wounds, January 22, 1863. He was wounded and suffered the loss of an arm at the battle of Fredericksburg.

Erastus McIntosh promoted corporal; reenlisted.

Alfred Piper promoted corporal; discharged on account of disability, October 16, 1862.

Frank J. Litch, wagoner, discharged at expiration of term of service, August 30, 1864.

Peter Archambeau discharged on account of disability, May 25, 1863.

Joseph B. Brown discharged on account of wounds, May 7, 1863.

Merrill Farwell discharged on account of disability, August 4, 1862.

James M. Garnet was transferred to Company H, October 20, 1861; promoted to sergeant; reenlisted and honorably discharged, September 24, 1864.

George G. Hadley was wounded at Camden, North Carolina, and discharged on account of wounds, December 4, 1862.

James P. Hare was wounded at Chantilly; discharged on account of wounds, January 16, 1863.

George W. Lawrence reenlisted.

Washburn Lewis discharged on account of disability, March 18, 1864.



James McIntire died at Newbern, North Carolina, April 21, 1862.

Ezra M. Merritt discharged on account of disability, August 9, 1862.

George E. Page killed at Fredericksburg, December 13, 1862.

Calvin Pindar reënlisted.

William Pratt wounded at Antietam and discharged on account of wounds, November 25, 1862.

Eugene A. Puffer wounded at Antietam; discharged on account of wounds, March 27, 1863.

Robert N. Shaw discharged on account of disability, November 29, 1862.

Ransom G. Stowell discharged on account of disability, May 8, 1862. He subsequently served in the Fifty-third Regiment.

George M. Wetherbee discharged at expiration of term of service, August 30, 1864.

James E. Whipple reënlisted.

Charles H. White, musician, reënlisted.

Frank B. Whitmore discharged at expiration of term of service, August 30, 1864.

Merrick Whitney, Jr., discharged on account of disability, January 26, 1863.

George W. Wilson discharged on account of disability, September 20, 1862.

Waldo Dwinnell enlisted January 5, 1864, and was assigned to this company; he was taken prisoner at the battle of the Wilderness, May 6, 1864, and died in Andersonville Prison in September.

Frank G. Kibling enlisted January 4, 1864, and died in hospital at Camp Nelson, Kentucky, February 22, 1864.

Sylvester F. Oliver enlisted January 5, 1864, and was



transferred to Thirty-sixth Regiment. He died January 29, 1865.

Henry E. Thomas enlisted December 31, 1863, and was killed in battle of Cold Harbor, June 2, 1864.

Hosea Wallace enlisted July 23, 1862, and was discharged with the regiment, August 30, 1864.

Lemuel Whitney enlisted in Company A of the same regiment, August 14, 1862, and was discharged with the regiment, August 30, 1864.

James H. Willard was an original member of company H, and was discharged, August 30, 1864.

Fernando C. L. W. Thayer enlisted in January, 1864, and was assigned to Company A. He was transferred with the veterans to the Thirty-sixth Regiment.

While the regiment was in Tennessee in December, 1863, a large part of the men reënlisted for the war. The veterans were granted a furlough of thirty days and were permitted to visit their homes. When the regiment was dismissed at the expiration of term of service, the veterans were transferred to the Thirty-sixth Regiment. In this connection their continued service is stated. They remained with the army in Virginia until the regiment was disbanded at the expiration of term of service. They were then transferred to the Fifty-sixth Regiment and were honorably discharged with that regiment, July 12, 1865. The service was long and the record honorable. The veterans who counted twice on the quota of Ashburnham were, George E. Davis, Samuel C. Lesure, Lorenzo H. Gilbert, Charles Henry Puffer, George F. Puffer, Charles G. Lawrence, Erastus McIntosh, Charles H. White, George W. Lawrence, Henry H. Martindale, James M. Garnet and James E. Whipple.

Calvin Pindar enlisted on the quota of Ashburnham and reënlisted on quota of Clinton. Lyman F. Thurston of



Holden, Luther E. Stewart of Clinton, Henry C. Perkins of Fitzwilliam, New Hampshire, Frank Lumerzette of Holden and Timothy Donovan of Worcester, on reënlistment, were assigned on the quota of Ashburnham. The veterans who were credited to the quota of this town anticipated a bounty which they did not receive.

After the transfer to the Thirty-sixth Regiment in 1864 there were several casualties which have not been stated. Sylvester F. Oliver died January 29, 1865; Waldo Dwinell was taken prisoner at the battle of the Wilderness, May 6, 1864, and died within the rebel lines in September following; Frank Lumerzette died of wounds, August 12, 1864; Henry C. Perkins was transferred February 11, 1865, to the Veteran Reserve Corps, and James E. Whipple was discharged on account of disability, January 19, 1865.

In the Twenty-first Regiment, associated with and one of the men of Ashburnham, was Colonel Joseph P. Rice. He early manifested a military spirit and ability to command. He had been an able and popular commander of the Ashburnham Light Infantry, and at the outbreak of the war he was colonel of the Ninth Regiment of militia to which the Light Infantry belonged. In this service he had enjoyed the respect and confidence of his associates. In the beginning of the war he early tendered the service of his command to the governor and was greatly disappointed that his regiment was not accepted. Ready to enter the service in any capacity he was commissioned a captain in the Twenty-first Regiment and assigned to the command of Company H. In February following he was promoted to major and to lieutenant-colonel, May 16. He was a soldier in the best use of the term, and to bravery and courage he united manliness of character and genuine kindness of heart. At the battle of Chantilly, September 1, 1862, while advancing beyond



his command, to determine whether a force in his front were friends or enemies, he was shot through the body by a musket-ball and died instantly. The intelligence of his death was received with sudden grief and unfeigned expressions of personal sorrow. At a meeting of the town, November 4, 1862, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:

*Resolved*, That as citizens of Ashburnham we desire to express our deep sense of the loss we have sustained in the recent death of Lieutenant-Colonel Joseph P. Rice at the battle of Chantilly, and our appreciation of the lasting obligations under which we rest for the great service he has rendered us and his country in the time of need, and to show, as far as in us lies, a becoming respect for his memory.

*Resolved*, That in the death of Colonel Rice we mourn the loss of one who has been to us a friend and a townsman faithful to every delegated trust, discharging all the duties imposed upon him with a generous disregard of self and in such a manner as to entitle him to our warmest admiration and respect.

The best and wisest laws that have governed and fostered civilization often have been the crystallization of some rule of action which the people practised by choice a long time before they were required to yield a willing obedience to statute. In the same manner an humble and subordinate officer in the discharge of duty in a limited field has often employed methods of procedure which subsequently have been grasped and dignified with the authority of a policy in the conduct of national affairs. The officers of the army, who were the first to come into immediate contact with the institution of slavery and the attending embarrassments, originated and early put in practice the liberal policy which was finally adopted by the Government.



In the autumn of 1861, while the Twenty-first Regiment was in Maryland, in accordance with a practice then prevailing and encouraged in the army, the officers were expected to return to the owner any slave who might be found in their vicinity. Captain Walker, faithfully representing the sentiment of the men from Ashburnham under his command, was the first officer who refused to perform this service. On an occasion when Captain Walker was officer of the day, the dignified personage of Governor Hicks applied to him for the recovery of a slave then within the lines of the regiment. The governor was met with a decided refusal, from which he appealed with effect to the colonel of the regiment. The colonel ordered Captain Walker to find and deliver the fugitive to the expectant owner. To this Captain Walker replied that he did not enter the service for an opportunity of hunting slaves and politely requested his superior officer to detail some other captain to perform this servile duty. Then every captain in the regiment was in turn detailed for this work and every one followed the example of Captain Walker. The negro finally escaped. Had the fortunes of this slave been less fortuitous, the events of the day were the harbinger of the freedom of his race.

The large number already named, who entered the service in 1861, did not exhaust the patriotic impulse of the town. Immediately after the departure of Company G, Twenty-first Regiment, twenty men enlisted in Company F, Twenty-fifth Regiment. They were mustered into the service at Worcester in September and left for the seat of war, October 31, 1861. This organization has an excellent record. It was a part of the Burnside expedition and was retained in North Carolina until the decisive campaign in Virginia. It then participated in the battle of Cold Harbor and other engagements near Richmond. In October, 1864,



the reënlisted veterans and the later recruits formed a battalion of four companies and remained in the service until July 13, 1865. Three recruits, credited on the quota of Ashburnham, subsequently were assigned to this regiment and will be named in later paragraphs.

Frank A. Davis, Michael FitzGibbon, Francis H. Morton and Carlos P. Ward were veterans in this regiment. Davis and FitzGibbon were discharged at the close of the war in July, 1865. Morton was transferred to the Veteran Reserve Corps, and Ward, whose original enlistment was not credited to the quota of this town, died at Newbern, North Carolina, November 14, 1864.

Corporal Augustus S. Rockwood, Corporal John A. Spaulding, Octavius W. Brown, Harvey Clark, Lincoln Wallace and Martin Burgess were discharged at expiration of term of service in October, 1864. Burgess was a member of Company I, and Rockwood was wounded.

Stephen C. Hastings, musician, was honorably discharged August 30, 1862, at the reduction of the band, and Francis J. Barrett was killed at Cold Harbor, Virginia, June 3, 1864.

The remaining eight were discharged on account of disability as follows: Sergeant Oliver D. Wilder, March 12, 1863; James L. Walker, April 6, 1863; Luther Clark, March 12, 1863; Parley McIntire, May 20, 1863; Orin Morton, January 31, 1863; Charles E. Smith, May 26, 1862; Joshua T. Stowell, August 7, 1862, and Michael Thompson, April 27, 1863.

In this regiment and in Company I, was Henry K. Sampson who was originally credited on the quota of Royalston. He reënlisted on the quota of this town in January, 1864, and was discharged in July, 1865.



The remaining enlistments, during the year 1861, included Samuel D. Holt who enlisted on the quota of Readville in the Twenty-fourth Regiment, December 4, 1861, and reënlisted on the quota of Ashburnham and was promoted corporal in January, 1864; he continued in the service until January, 1866; Bartholomew Coughlin, who enlisted December 6, in the Twenty-ninth Regiment and died 1862; Pascal Brooks enlisted November 1, in Thirty-second Regiment and died October 1, 1862, at Sharpsburg, Maryland; Francis S. Willard enlisted November 1, in Thirty-second Regiment and died in Virginia, February 5, 1863; Leroy A. Howe enlisted November 6, in Thirty-second Regiment and was discharged on account of disability, November 29, 1862; Charles F. Leathers, a veteran, enlisted November 4, in Thirty-second Regiment, promoted to corporal, reënlisted January 5, 1864, and was dismissed with his regiment, June 29, 1865; Marcus L. Ward enlisted October 30, 1861, in Thirty-second Regiment and was discharged on account of disability, February 26, 1863; John Hare enlisted November 7, 1861, Thirtieth Regiment, died at Ship Island, Mississippi, March 8, 1862; George G. Farwell enlisted November 2, 1861, on the quota of Fitchburg, in Thirty-second Regiment; he reënlisted January 4, 1864, on quota of this town and was killed June 18, 1864.

In 1862 there was a call for three hundred thousand men. The quota of Ashburnham was twenty-seven. In the Thirty-fourth Regiment, which left the State August 15, there were five men from this town. They enlisted in July. Sergeant Charles Wood was promoted to second lieutenant, May 15, 1865, and discharged with his regiment; Walter O. Parker, musician, was discharged with his regiment, June 16, 1865; Sumner W. Black died at Harper's Ferry, Virginia, November 10, 1863; Alfred Castle was discharged



on account of disability, February 11, 1865, and Martin V. B. Grimes was discharged on account of wounds, February 16, 1865.

The Thirty-sixth Regiment was recruited in July and August and left the State September 2. This organization contained, at this time, twenty-three men from this town. It will be noted that a few of them were temporary residents at the date of enlistment.

Of the twenty-three in this service, nine were honorably discharged with their regiment, June 8, 1865, as follows: Sergeant Charles W. Whitney promoted to second lieutenant, November 13, 1864, Sergeant George N. Duncan, Sergeant Charles I. Fish, Chester B. Gale, Francis H. Perkins, Frank S. Learned, John C. Lawrence, Cyrus W. Nickerson and Joseph Oaks.

On account of disability the following six were discharged: Thomas H. Ryan, March 11, 1863; Sergeant Waldo A. Foster, May 30, 1863; Corporal John B. Harty, date unknown; John L. Finney, January 13, 1865; Mitchell Larby, no record; Edward Sibley, April 12, 1865.

The individual record of the remaining men is as follows: Sergeant Joseph Hames died of wounds, June 4, 1864; Corporal Frederick Biron died of wounds at Knoxville, Kentucky, January 11, 1864; Corporal Max Hoffman was killed at Petersburg, Virginia, June 17, 1864; Otis Metcalf and Edward B. Merriam were transferred to the Veteran Reserve Corps; Dennis Murphy reënlisted and was transferred on the quota of Hardwick to the regular army; Charles W. Allard was left in the hospital at Worcester and there died, September 15, a few days after the regiment left the State. The record of the remaining man from Ashburnham is exceptional. Charles Sherbert deserted April 27, 1863.



The Thirty-sixth Regiment was an organization of good repute. In the army in Virginia, in Mississippi and the siege of Vicksburg and later in Virginia, in the closing yet sanguinary service of the war, it has left an honorable and gallant record.

In the autumn of this year the Fifty-third Regiment was recruited under the call of the President for men to serve nine months. In this organization Ashburnham was represented by twenty-seven officers and men. Of this regiment, George H. Barrett, who had been an officer of the Light Infantry, was lieutenant-colonel. The regiment was ordered to the South and rendered efficient service in Louisiana under General Banks. The organization was mustered out September 3, 1863.

In this service four died of disease, one was killed in action and two were discharged on account of disability. Henry A. Marble died at New Orleans, May 19; Rinaldo Shattuck died May 8, at Brashear; Stephen C. Whitney died February 20, at New Orleans; James M. Woodell died June 7, at New Orleans; Russell Whipple was killed at Port Hudson, June 14; Corporal Orange E. Howe was discharged February 25 and William M. Young was discharged March 12, 1863. The remaining twenty-one completed the term of enlistment and were returned to their homes in September, 1863: Lieutenant-Colonel George H. Barrett, Sergeant William D. Capron, Corporal Spencer Frost, Corporal William Wallace, Corporal Ransom G. Stowell, Francis S. Balcom, Marshall H. Bourne, Aaron G. Buttrick, David M. Cushing, Edwin J. Cushing, Lewis Glazier, Thomas M. Howard, Charles B. Jones, James F. Lincoln, Horace O. Mansfield, Augustine May, Francis H. Merriam, Francis A. Munroe, Hobart W. Piper, Harvey J. Rice, Frederick R. Whipple.



Colonel Barrett was commissioned captain of Company I, and promoted to lieutenant-colonel, November 10. He was in command of the regiment at its departure from the State and remained in the service until the regiment was discharged.

These numerous enlistments filled the quota of 1862. At this time the town met and passed the following resolution :

*Resolved*, That we recognize the devotion and disinterested services of all our fellow-townsmen who have gone out from among us to engage in the service of the country, and that the town clerk be requested to collect and enter upon the town records the names of all our townsmen who have been or may hereafter be killed or otherwise lose their lives in the service of their country in putting down the present unholy rebellion.

The generous impulse of the several towns which tendered temporary relief to the families of the soldiers was sustained and continued by the State and through the war the generous measures adopted by the Commonwealth were faithfully executed by the towns. The continued action of the citizens and of the town officers of Ashburnham was in full accord with a generous and comprehensive system of benevolence.

The enlistments of 1861 and 1862 called a large proportion of the men of suitable age into the service. The quota of 1863 was filled with less alacrity and a draft was ordered. This peremptory demand for troops was general throughout the North, and Ashburnham shared with other towns a new experience of the war. Sixty-four men from this town were drafted. Of these a considerable number were discharged on account of disability and of those held for service, several furnished substitutes or paid commutation. The names of those who entered the service in response to this imperative command will appear in the subsequent paragraphs in the



list of those who entered the service. The names of the drafted men are as follows :

John D. Hapgood  
Charles F. Rockwood  
George A. Stone  
Austin Brooks  
Granville B. Gilchrist  
Samuel E. Stone  
Albert F. Johnson  
Willard P. Drury  
William Dalrymple  
Hiland Hall  
Orrin N. Bennett  
William Briggs  
Alexander Morse  
William W. Lane  
George L. Beals, Jr.  
Asahel Wheeler  
Earl Richel  
Merrick Hadley  
Nazzar Dane  
Charles W. Lane  
Stephen Sawin  
Edwin J. Russell  
Henry Pelky  
Jonas P. Sawin  
William Franklin  
Thomas Doolan  
William L. G. Ward  
Alexander Grout  
Jesse W. Goodwin  
Hosea S. Whitney  
Charles H. Wallace  
Rodney King

Franklin S. Oliver  
Osmore A. Brigham  
Timothy O'Keif  
Walter Lawrence  
Irving Brooks  
Jona. E. Goodwin  
David S. Brown  
Wendell P. Clark  
Frederick Wilder  
Benton Adams  
Robert N. Shaw  
Ed. W. Weston  
George F. Potter  
Joseph L. Brigham  
George G. Hadley  
Charles C. Eaton  
Orange S. May  
Martin B. Lane  
Patrick Mulchey  
John M. Baldwin  
Augustus G. Nutting  
Edward G. Newell  
Henry W. Ward  
Charles S. Keyes  
Fred M. Stanley  
Edwin A. Whitney  
Osman Casvant  
William C. Marea  
Mark Dunlap  
Theodore Barron  
Peter Sherbert  
Cyrus D. Horton



The immediate effect of the draft was depressing. The gloomy days of the war and the season of discontent were during the spring and early summer of 1863. The spontaneous enthusiasm among the masses which attended the early progress of the war, reflecting the warm colors of hope and courage, began to wane and a general sentiment of depression was instant and pervading. Presently the victory at Gettysburg and the success of the army in the West invited the people to rally for the closing struggle. The firm command of General Grant and a unity of movement and purpose, which controlled the separate armies, restored the confidence and elicited an enthusiasm scarcely less exultant than that which thrilled the loyal North at the fall of Sumter. During these fluctuations in the general sentiment of the North, the people of Ashburnham, unmoved by the influences of the hour, maintained a record unstained by the shadow of disloyalty.

The men who entered the service in 1863 were generally assigned to regiments already in the field and very few of them were in any one organization. In July Rodney King was assigned to the Nineteenth and transferred to the Twentieth Regiment; John M. Baldwin was assigned to the Thirty-ninth and transferred to the Thirty-second Regiment; John E. Valentine, a corporal, to the Fifteenth Regiment; and John Fitzgerald to the Nineteenth and transferred to the Twentieth Regiment. These men remained in the service to the close of the war and were honorably discharged.

In July and August the quota of the town was credited with the names of Charles Lepond, John Shaffer, James Burke, Charles Wilson and Thomas Andrews. These were hired recruits and all of them deserted soon after, and to secure additional bounty, undoubtedly, they enlisted and deserted again before the close of the war.



George F. Potter enlisted July 14 and was assigned to the Sixteenth Regiment. He was subsequently transferred to the Eleventh Regiment and was discharged in May, 1865. In the Second Regiment Heavy Artillery was Harvey P. Brooks and Edwin A. Pollard; the former enlisted in July and served to the end of the war; the latter enlisted in October and died at Newbern, North Carolina, November 16, 1864. Francis Sacket, who enlisted in November, was assigned to the Twenty-seventh Regiment and in January, 1865, was transferred to the Veteran Reserve Corps. Patrick Doolan enlisted in December and served to the close of the war in the First Battery Light Artillery. John Cassidy enlisted in August in the Sixteenth and was transferred to the Eleventh Regiment. He was discharged after a service of eighteen months on account of disability. Archibald McMahon enlisted December 25 and deserted from the Twenty-fifth Regiment after a service of eight weeks, and Theodore A. Dodge enlisted in the Veteran Reserve Corps in November.

From January 1, 1864, to April 1, 1865, eighty-three enlistments were credited to the quota of Ashburnham. This number includes four entries into the Twenty-first Regiment, twenty-six reenlisted men and fifty-three new enlistments. A few of the men who entered the service during this period were hired recruits who received the bounty offered by the town without reluctance or conscientious scruple, and with equal alacrity deserted at the first opportunity. Others were residents of this town and all of these earned an honorable record. In the following list will appear the names of several who had previously been honorably discharged from a former service. Unless otherwise stated all of the following were honorably discharged on account of expiration of term of service or at the close of the war.



NAMES.	DATE OF ENLISTMENT.	MILITARY ORGANIZATION	REMARKS.
William S. White	Jan. 4, 1864	57th Regiment	Discharged July 30, 1865
John Fregean	"	"	Died May 30, 1864
Louis C. E. Coderre	"	"	Deserted April 1, 1864
Morris Smeddy	Jan. 18, 1864	7th Regiment	Transferred to 57th and to 20th Regt.; discharged June 16, 1865
Dennis O'Neill	Jan. 5, 1864	25th Regiment	Died in Rebel Prison Aug. 6, 1864
Josiah Thomas	Jan. 20, 1864	5th Cavalry	Discharged Oct. 1, 1865
Job Foster	May 13, 1864	19th Regiment	Discharged Mar. 25, 1865
William Doolan	"	"	Discharged July 20, 1865
James Kelley	June 2, 1864	"	Discharged June 30, 1865
Frank B. Sawtelle	June 14, 1864	2d H. A.	Discharged May 6, 1865. He had previously been in Regimental Band 20th Regt.
Henry T. Lane	June 14, 1864	2d H. A.	Died Oct. 29, 1864
Charles T. Chamberlain	July 20, 1864	60th Regiment	100 days service; dischar'd Nov. 30, 1864
Charles L. Starkey	July 20, 1864	"	100 days service; dischar'd Nov. 30, 1864
Albert H. Tuckerman	July 23, 1864	5th Regiment	100 days service; dischar'd Nov. 16, 1864
Hobart W. Piper	Aug. 6, 1864	Unattached	Promoted corporal; discharged Nov. 14, 1864. He formerly served in 53d Regt.
Frank W. Bemis	Aug. 6, 1864	Unattached	Discharged Nov. 14, 1864
Irving Brooks	"	"	"
Harlem E. Ward	"	"	"
Alexander O'Brien	Aug. 11, 1864	29th Regiment	This name is repeated in a later service
Samuel A. Taylor	Aug. 16, 1864	4th H. A.	Discharged July 29, 1865
Asabel Wheeler	Aug. 20, 1864	4th H. A.	Formerly a captain in 21st Regt. In this service he was a lieutenant; resig'd March 8, 1865
Joseph H. Whitney	Aug. 20, 1864	4th H. A.	Formerly a captain in 21st Regt. He was commissioned a captain in this service and assigned to the 61st Regt. Mustered out at expiration of term of service
Oliver D. Wilder	Aug. 20, 1864	4th H. A.	This was his third enlistment. He was formerly a lieutenant in 21st Regt. Promoted in this service to sergeant-major, Dec. 1, 1864; discharged June 17, 1865
Theodore Greenwood	"	"	Discharged June 17, 1865
Ebenezer Hart	"	"	"
Frederick Hammond	"	"	"
James Fargo	"	"	"
William H. Smith	"	"	"
George O. Whitney	"	"	"
Joseph Hanwart	Sept. 21, 1864	30th Regiment	Discharged July 5, 1866
Etiene Lechuga	"	"	"
Sereno Newton	Feb. 6, 1865	2d Cavalry	Discharged May 18, 1865
Richard C. Chase	Feb. 21, 1865	"	Discharged July 20, 1865
David O. Williams	Feb. 2, 1865	1st H. A.	Deserted Oct. 4, 1865
Charles H. Whipple	Feb. 23, 1865	14th Artillery	Discharged June 15, 1865
Walter C. Clark	Feb. 6, 1865	19th Regiment	Discharged Feb. 20, 1865, on account of disability
Harlem E. Ward	Jan. 3, 1865	4th Cavalry	Discharged Aug. 12, 1865
Michael Horrigan	Feb. 18, 1865	19th Regiment	Discharged June 30, 1865
George G. Hadley	June 28, 1864	V. R. C.	Discharged Aug. 31, 1866
Isaac Call	Aug. 29, 1864	"	Discharged Nov. 15, 1865
Michael Mulloy	Aug. 27, 1864	"	Deserted Sept. 29, 1864



NAMES.	DATE OF ENLISTMENT.	MILITARY ORGANIZATION	REMARKS.
James Walker	Sept. 1, 1864	V. R. C.	Discharged Nov. 14, 1864
Newton B. Whitman	Sept. 2, 1864	"	No record
William Pfaffle	Feb. 20, 1865	"	"
Charles W. Kendall	Dec. 20, 1864	Hancock Corps	"
Michael Murphy	Jan. 18, 1865	"	"
John E. Waiant	"	"	"
John Rebel	Feb. 6, 1865	N. C. Regiment	"
William G. Davenport	Sept. 14, 1864	U. S. A.	"
George H. Litch	Nov. 11, 1864	"	"
Charles W. Brigham	Mar. 2, 1865	"	"
Francis E. Brigham	Mar. 3, 1865	"	"
William Butler	Feb. 4, 1865	"	"

In the midst of the later enlistments and accounting for a few of them the following persons were drafted May 16, 1864: Patrick O'Brien, Martin N. Ward, Thomas Hammond, Thomas Mahan, Amos F. Willard, Patrick J. Hare, Timothy A. Tenney, Merrick Hadley, George A. Stone, Job Foster, Orange S. Whitmore, Hezekiah Matthews, Joseph L. Brigham, Frederick Pelky, George G. Rockwood, Aaron Rice, William Doolan and Hartwell Tenney. No official statement of the several quotas of this town has been found and the records of the town afford no information. The number of enlistments in 1861 was eighty-five; in 1862 fifty-seven; in 1863 eighteen and in 1864 and the early months of 1865, including the veterans, there were eighty-three enlistments, making an aggregate of two hundred and forty-three entries in the service from this town during the war. The whole number of individuals who entered the service from Ashburnham, so far as found in this record, is two hundred and thirteen. Joseph H. Whitney is credited with three enlistments and the following persons were counted twice upon the quota of the town: Charles H. Heald, Martin V. B. Grimes, Charles W. Kendall, Francis Sacket, Augustus McIntosh, Samuel A. Taylor, Asahel Wheeler, George E. Davis, Samuel C. Lesure, Lorenzo H. Gilbert, Charles G. Lawrence, George W. Lawrence,



Charles H. Puffer, George F. Puffer, Henry H. Martindale, Charles H. White, Erastus McIntosh, James M. Garnet, George G. Hadley, Ransom G. Stowell, James E. Whipple, Frank A. Davis, Michael FitzGibbon, Francis H. Morton, Oliver D. Wilder, Charles F. Leathers, Hobart W. Piper, Harlem E. Ward.

Several, who were residents of Ashburnham at the time they entered the service, enlisted on the quota and their names appear in the records of other towns. It is not presumed that the following list is complete.

Noyes B. Herrick, Clarence D. Proctor and Alden W. Parker, on the quota of Fitchburg, served in the Fourth Regiment Heavy Artillery from August 20, 1864, to June 17, 1865.

Lieutenant George M. Munroe, on the quota of Boston, was an original member of Company G, Twenty-first Regiment. He was promoted from first sergeant to second lieutenant, September 26, 1862, and to first lieutenant, March 3, 1863. At the battle of Antietam, after Lieutenant Charles H. Parker was removed from the field on account of wounds, he assumed command of the company and was wounded in the knee and the arm.

Charles L. Stimson was in Company E, Twenty-fourth Regiment, on the quota of Boston. He was detailed as military secretary to General Burnside and subsequently was commissioned a lieutenant in the First Ohio Cavalry.

George Henry Stearns, credited to Bridgewater, was a member of the Brigade Band, Twentieth Army Corps.

William H. Richardson, Otis Pratt and Aaron Pratt served in Rhode Island regiments.

Aaron B. Bixby enlisted from Fitchburg in Company A, Thirty-sixth Regiment, and was transferred in September, 1863, to the Veteran Reserve Corps.



Corporal Charles M. Whitney, assigned to quota of Fitchburg, was a member of Company D, Twenty-first Regiment. He was killed September 1, 1862, at the battle of Chantilly.

Ephraim W. Moore enlisted from Boston in Company F, Second Regiment. He died August 20, 1862, from wounds received in the engagement of Cedar Mountain.

Newton Brooks, on the quota of Gardner, was a member of Company G, Fifty-third Regiment.

Patrick Fitzgerald, there known as James Fitz, was a member of Company K, Sixth New Hampshire Regiment. He served from November, 1861, to July 17, 1865.

Webster W. Wallace, on the quota of Lawrence, enlisted in First Regiment Heavy Artillery, August 1, 1861. He was promoted a sergeant and died of wounds, July 26, 1864.

In other regiments are found the names of Henry Merriam, George Willard, Charles Stone, John L. Cook, Reuben A. Buzzell, George O. Metcalf and George P. Ward.

A large number of the sons of Ashburnham who removed from their native town previous to the war were in the service and several were officers of rank and distinction. So far as the facts are ascertained, a record of service will be given in the family registers.



## CHAPTER XX.

PHYSICIANS. — LAWYERS. — PERSONAL NOTICES. — COLLEGE GRADUATES. — OTHER SONS OF ASHBURNHAM.

DOCTORS BROOKS, SENTER, ABRAHAM LOWE, ABRAHAM T. LOWE, NATHANIEL PEIRCE, ABERCROMBIE, CUTLER, STONE, MILLER, WALLACE, WHITMORE, MATTOON, TEMPLE, JILLSON, CHARLES L. PIERCE, STICKNEY, AMORY JEWETT, NATHANIEL JEWETT. — LAWYERS CUNNINGHAM, ADAMS, PARKER AND ANDREWS. — SAMUEL WILDER. — JOSEPH JEWETT. — IVERS JEWETT. — JACOB WILLARD. — SILAS WILLARD. — JOHN ADAMS. — ENOCH WHITMORE. — JEROME W. FOSTER. — OHIO WHITNEY. — ISAAC HILL. — THOMAS PARKMAN CUSHING. — MILTON WHITNEY. — A LIST OF COLLEGE GRADUATES. — OTHER SONS OF ASHBURNHAM.

PHYSICIANS. — Ashburnham has been fortunate in the character and ability of the resident physicians. The following list includes several men of superior skill and professional reputation.

DR. PETER BROOKS was the first physician of Ashburnham, and during the greater part of his practice here he had no competitor. Dr. Senter was here a short time, but his practice was not of sufficient duration to disturb him in the full possession of the field which he held until the arrival of Dr. Lowe. Dr. Brooks lived on the old Winchendon road, between the common and the David Russell farm. About 1792 he left town and nothing is known of his subsequent history. His family remained permanently and his descendants in this town have been numerous. Of the native ability and professional skill of Dr. Brooks little is known. From the fact that he remained here twenty years it is reasonable



to presume that he enjoyed some measure of public confidence.

DR. SENTER was here a short time immediately preceding the Revolution. In 1774 he was chosen one of a committee to amend the Boston Covenant before it was signed, but his name does not appear again in the records. Tradition preserves his name and compliments him with good ability and a liberal education. His stay was brief and his connection with this town unimportant.

DR. ABRAHAM LOWE, son of Jonathan and Sarah (Perkins) Lowe, was born in Ipswich, February 11, 1755. The homestead of his father was in the parish of Chebacco, and is now a part of the town of Essex. In his infancy the family removed to Lunenburg. If Dr. Lowe did not pursue a liberal course of academical study at the schools he was a close and attentive reader and an accurate scholar. His professional studies were pursued under the tuition of Dr. Abraham Haskell, a justly famed physician of Lunenburg. At this time Dr. Lowe became acquainted with Dr. Peter Snow, who was a fellow-student, and subsequently a distinguished physician and esteemed citizen of Fitchburg. The acquaintance ripened into a mutual friendship which was sustained through life. In 1786, or the year preceding, Dr. Lowe removed to Ashburnham and here began the labor of a long and useful life. In an eminent degree he was trusted as a physician and esteemed as a citizen. He was frequently chosen to positions of trust and in professional employment he had no rival for many years. Among his minor employments Dr. Lowe was town clerk seven years, transcribing the records in a clear hand and in well-chosen language. But for municipal service he found little leisure. His active years were devoted to his profession and few physicians have practised with less criticism and greater success. Among



his fellow-men he was accorded a supremacy which is only surrendered to superior abilities and unchallenged character. The aged who remember him are familiar with the courtesy of his manner, the kindness of his heart and the impress of truth and wisdom which attended his speech. He died October 23, 1834.

DR. ABRAHAM T. LOWE, a son of Dr. Abraham Lowe and Charlotte (Hale) Lowe, was born in this town, August 15, 1796. The influences of his home invited study, and at an early age he attended the academy in New Ipswich, and at twenty years of age he was graduated a Doctor of Medicine at Dartmouth Medical College. At the solicitation of his father he commenced practice in this town where he was successfully employed nine years. His circuit extended into Westminster and other adjoining towns. Of his professional labors at this time Dr. Lowe has said, "My duties called me, I believe, almost without exception, into every house and family in town. I knew the direction and condition of every road, bridle path and passable cross-cut way. I never, while in health, declined a professional visit. I rode on horseback, in a light-wheel carriage, or sleigh, to meet the requirements of the season or state of the travelled ways; but there were times when travelling in either of these modes was impracticable; then I took to my rackets, or Indian snow-shoes; and I have frequently in this manner made visits, both in and out of town."

In the midst of this arduous, professional employment Dr. Lowe took an active interest in the schools of this town and was a member of the committee of supervision. He was popular with all classes and is held in grateful remembrance by the aged who were his associates. In 1825 or 1826 he removed to Boston and engaged in the business of a wholesale and prescription druggist. In this business he was successful and retired with a competency in 1839.



Dr. Lowe has been a director in several monetary institutions and in this direction his service has been conspicuous. In 1859 he was chosen president of the Safety Fund Bank which subsequently became the First National Bank of Boston, and under his sagacious management this institution has maintained a prominent position among its energetic rivals. Dr. Lowe was an able advocate, and was prominently identified with the construction of the Boston and Lowell railroad. At that date many regarded the project as experimental, but the substantial results are a tribute to the foresight and judgment of Dr. Lowe and his associates. He was one of the early directors of the road from Worcester to Albany and for several years a director of the Boston and Worcester railroad and also the Fall River railroad. He early and clearly comprehended the importance of these gigantic enterprises and with energy and courage he labored for the future interests of his city and Commonwealth.

In addition to efficient service for the public schools of Boston, he has repeatedly served in the Board of Aldermen, and beginning in 1824, he has been a member of the Massachusetts Legislature several years. In this service he disclosed the rare traits of mind and of character which distinguish his successful career in business.

In early life Dr. Lowe compiled the *Columbian Orator*, a school-book which was favorably received, and subsequently he published the *Second Class Book*, for younger pupils; but he is better known as the author of several papers upon scientific and medical subjects. He is one of the original trustees of Cushing Academy and during the past ten years he has been president of the board.

Dr. Lowe at the age of almost ninety years has earned a respite from active employment. Without ambition or ostentation he has conscientiously met every responsibility



and faithfully directed every interest confided to his care. His industry, his integrity and his purity of character, which attended him through life, now crown his age with blessings and honor.

DR. NATHANIEL PEIRCE, a son of Oliver and Mary (Smith) Peirce, was born in Lunenburg, October 8, 1778. He pursued his preparatory studies at New Ipswich Academy and was a teacher in the public schools several years. He entered Harvard University, but on account of failing health did not graduate. Later he pursued a course of professional study and received his diploma at the Medical School, then in Weathersfield, Vermont, and in that town he practised a short time. Leaving Weatherfield he removed to his native town where he was engaged in the manufacture of wool or felt hats, at that time one of the home industries of New England. He removed to this town in 1825 and immediately entered upon the practice of his profession. From the first he secured and maintained the confidence of the people and for many years his practice was large and remunerative. In the mean time he purchased many acres of land and became a prosperous farmer, and as the infirmities of age invited him to less active pursuits he gradually retired from practice and gave his attention to the supervision of his farm.

A tall, commanding man, his head towering above the multitude, he was dignified in manner and deliberate in the use of words. In method he was direct and aggressive, and if he was sometimes blunt in his speech he was generally just. His opinions were well matured and when required they were expressed without evasion or concealment. If he honestly differed with others in opinion and expressed his own views plainly, he tolerated no contention and conducted no quarrels. He was a kind neighbor, an honest man and a faithful citizen. He was frequently chosen by his townsmen

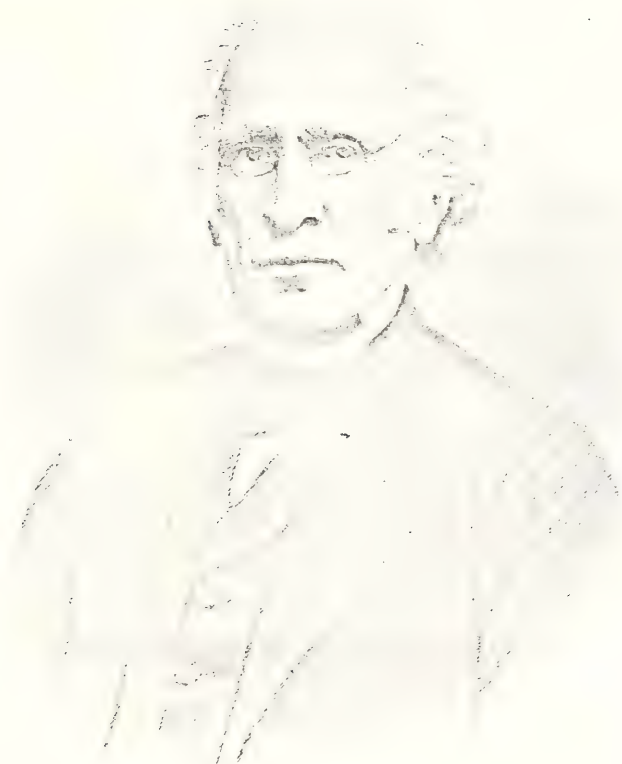




A. I. Lowe Boston

A. I. Lowe





FRANKLIN

Wm H. Butler.



to local office and was a member of the Legislature 1831 and 1832. He died September 3, 1862.

DR. OTIS ABERCROMBIE, a native of Deerfield and a graduate of the Yale Medical School, came to Ashburnham in 1827. He was favorably received and was chosen a member of the school committee soon after his arrival. At this time the field was occupied by members of the profession who had become established in the confidence of the people. In 1829 he removed to Fitchburg. After a successful practice of nine years, on account of failing health, he retired from business and removed to Lunenburg where he died January 24, 1851, aged forty-nine years.

DR. WILLIAM H. CUTLER, son of Jonathan and Keziah (Hutchins) Cutler, was born in Plainfield, Connecticut, July 2, 1787. After attending school at the academy in Plainfield he pursued his professional studies with Dr. Darius Hutchins of Abington, Connecticut. His first professional labors were in Winchendon where he practised about seven years. In 1820 he removed to New Salem and was there successfully employed until he removed to this town in 1829. In Winchendon he was a member of the school committee in 1819 and in New Salem he was frequently chosen to positions of trust, among which he was for many years one of the trustees of the New Salem Academy. In this town Dr. Cutler rode a wide circuit many years and was justly regarded as a conscientious, skilful physician. As a man, he was upright, sincere and honest, and was held in high esteem. As the infirmities of age grew upon him he retired from active practice and removed in 1864 to Andover where he died July 16, 1867.

DR. WILLIAM P. STONE, son of David and Lydia (Perkins) Stone and a brother of Rev. Benjamin P. Stone, D. D., late of Concord, New Hampshire, was born in Reading,



Vermont, July 23, 1809. A few years after this date the family removed from Reading to Enosburg, Vermont. Dr. Stone graduated at Dartmouth Medical School in 1835 and came to this town in 1837, where he was successfully employed eight years. From the first he was well received. Beneath a modest and unassuming manner, there was no failure in the discovery of an intelligent mind and a faithful and competent physician. He had many friends and no enemies. In the spring of 1845 he removed to Boston and previous to 1850 he removed to Danbury, New Hampshire, where he remained several years. In October, 1862, he was commissioned assistant surgeon of the Second New Hampshire Volunteers, and was promoted to surgeon of this regiment, July 6, 1864. He remained in the service until the regiment was mustered out, December 19, 1865. Soon after the war he removed from Danbury to Westminster, Vermont, where he continued the practice of his profession a few years. He died in Burke, New York, 1872.

DR. ALFRED MILLER, son of John and Betsey (Robinson) Miller, was born in Westminster, Vermont, March 15, 1815. He pursued his preparatory studies in the schools of Westminster and Bernardston and graduated at Middlebury College 1840. While reading for his profession he taught school several years and completed his study with Dr. Alfred Hitchcock and at the Medical School in Woodstock, Vermont, where he graduated in 1844. In the following year he entered upon the practice of his profession in this town where he was successfully employed until he removed to Fitchburg in 1863.

He was a skilful physician and was highly respected by all who knew him. Affable and kind in his manner, attentive to the calls of his profession, he was a popular physician and a valued citizen. Dr. Miller was repeatedly elected a



member of the school committee and to other positions of trust. In Fitchburg he was eminently successful. He continued in active practice in that city until his death, November 15, 1877, aged sixty-two years. He was a member of the Legislature 1866 and 1876.

DR. MERRICK WALLACE, a son of Nahum Wallace of Oxford, was born April 12, 1808. In 1847 he completed a course of study at the Botanical Medical College then in Worcester, and to this school of medicine he closely adhered in his practice. His remedial methods were then comparatively new and he early secured a liberal patronage. His practice extended into the adjoining towns and frequently he made long journeys in response to demands for his professional attendance. Dr. Wallace was also a successful farmer and in this pursuit he manifested a constant interest. He died May 22, 1875.

DR. LORENZO LOCKE WHITMORE, a son of Colonel Enoch and Clarissa (Willard) Whitmore, was born in this town, July 2, 1823. With the exception of Dr. Abraham T. Lowe, he is the only physician in this town who was born within the field of his professional labor. He pursued a liberal course of academical and professional study, graduating at the Harvard Medical School in the class of 1852. After a brief practice in Warwick, he returned to this town and assumed the management of a large farm which for more than one hundred years has been the homestead of his ancestors. For several years he rode an extended circuit in this town and in Rindge, and fully maintained the confidence of his patrons. More recently he has found full employment in the management of his farm.

DR. JOHN ORLANDO MATTOON (eclectic) was a native of Vershire, Vermont, born October 10, 1837. He was educated at the academy in Chelsea, Vermont, and the



well-known institution in New London, New Hampshire. He read for his profession with Dr. George K. Bagley of Chelsea, Vermont, and graduated at a medical school in Cincinnati in 1858. The same year he located in this town and practised with a fair measure of success until his early death which occurred January 13, 1862.

DR. THERON TEMPLE, son of John and Sally (Taylor) Temple, was born in Heath, April 20, 1833. He is a graduate of Berkshire Medical College in class of 1856. In 1857 he entered upon the practice of his profession in Belchertown and was there successfully employed until 1861, when he was commissioned assistant-surgeon in the Twenty-fifth Massachusetts Volunteers. This regiment was assigned to the Burnside expedition. In this service Dr. Temple contracted malarial fever and resigned in the spring of 1862. The same year he removed to this town where he commanded the respect of the community and secured a lucrative practice. While residing in this town he was examining surgeon by appointment from Governor Andrew. In the autumn of 1864, he removed to Amherst and continued in active practice until 1875. During the past ten years he has been employed in the customs service at Boston with a residence in Waltham.

DR. HARVEY D. JILLSON (eclectic) pursued his professional studies at Harvard Medical School and at Worcester. Adopting the theories of the eclectic school, he entered upon the practice of his profession in Leominster in 1860. He removed to this town in 1864. He was elected a member of the school committee for three years but removed to Fitchburg in 1868 before the completion of the term. For two years he was president of the Worcester North Eclectic Society, and eleven years its secretary, and was a vice-president of the National Eclectic Medical Society.



He died September 25, 1877, aged forty-three years.

DR. CHARLES L. PIERCE, son of John F. and Abigail Fiske Pierce, was born in Derby, Vermont, May 17, 1840. He attended school at Newbury, Vermont, and at Meriden, New Hampshire, and graduated at the New York College of Physicians and Surgeons. He practised his profession a short time at Charlestown, New Hampshire, and removed to this town in 1865. Dr. Pierce was generally regarded as a skilful physician and was employed by a considerable part of the community. He removed to Natick in 1871, and from thence to San Francisco, California, where he died May 11, 1885.

DR. ALONZO LAWRENCE STICKNEY, son of Alvah and Rebecca (Wright) Stickney, was born in Townsend, May 26, 1835. He attended the academies at Milford and New Ipswich, New Hampshire, and graduated at Harvard Medical School in the class of 1862. His first professional labors were at Sutton. In the spring of 1864 he was appointed assistant-surgeon in the regular army and served to the close of the war. Returning to Sutton he was there successfully employed in the practice of his profession until his removal to this town in 1871. In an unusual degree, he early secured and has merited the confidence of his patrons. His success as a physician and his usefulness as a citizen will elicit prompt recognition in future reviews of completed labor.

DR. AMORY JEWETT, son of Amory and Lucy E. (Die-waide) Jewett, was born in Boston, January 17, 1833. He attended the public schools of Boston and graduated at the Eclectic Medical College, Cincinnati, Ohio. After a brief practice in Boston, he removed to this town in 1868 and remained in successful practice until 1873. Since he removed from this town he has practised in Clinton, Fitchburg



and Hubbardston. On account of failing health he has retired from active practice and now resides in Somerville. Dr. Jewett, while residing in this town, was successively secretary, councillor and president of the Worcester North Eclectic Medical Society.

DR. NATHANIEL JEWETT, a brother of Dr. Amory Jewett, was born in Boston, March 10, 1841. He graduated at the Boston High School in 1858 and pursued a course of professional study under private tuition. He graduated at the Boston Dental College 1869, and at the New York Eclectic College 1871. In the mean time Dr. Jewett attended lectures at Harvard Medical School and at the College of Physicians and Surgeons, New York. He removed to this town in 1871 and has maintained a lucrative practice to the present time. He has been president of the Worcester North Eclectic Medical Society, and for many years the secretary and treasurer. He has been councillor and president of the Massachusetts Eclectic Medical Society and is a member of the National Eclectic Medical Association. Dr. Jewett is the eighteenth resident physician who has practised in this town and among this number none has been more constantly employed.

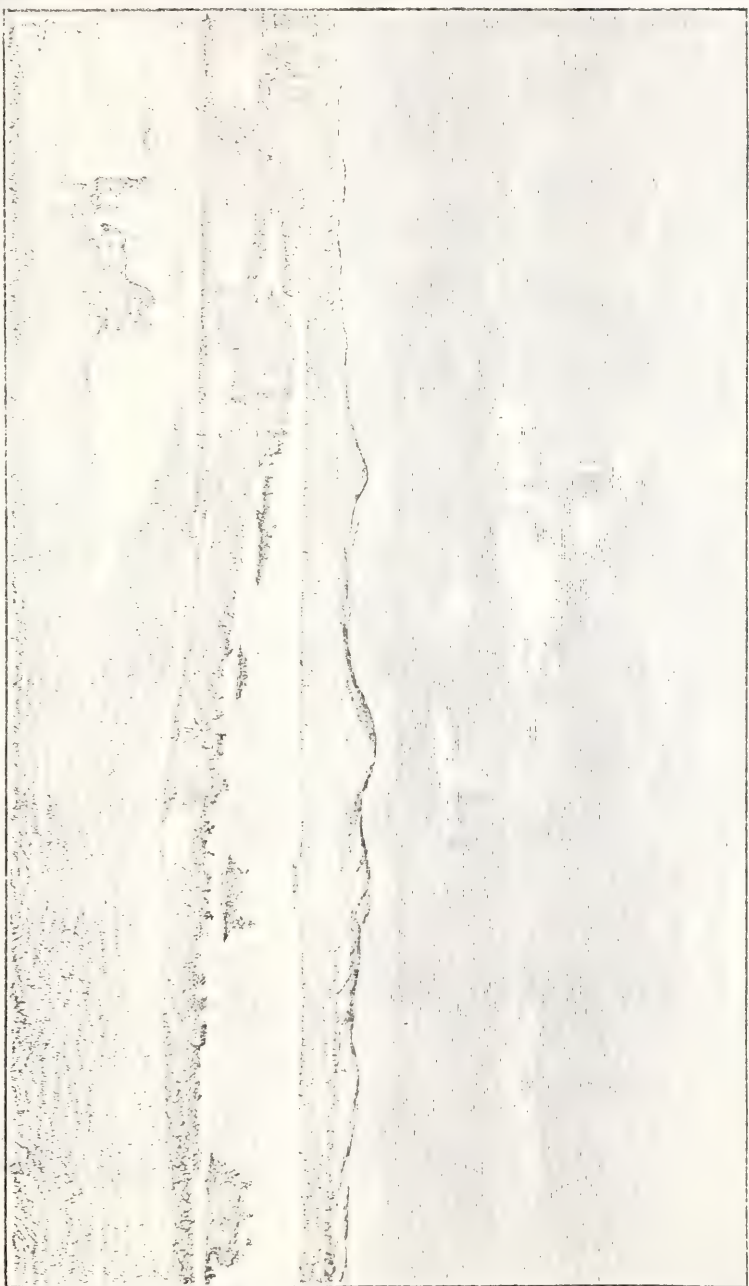
DR. CHARLES KNOWLTON was here a few months in the autumn and winter of 1830-31.

DR. MILES SPAULDING, now of Groton, practised in this town from April to September, 1845, supplying the time between the practice of Dr. Stone and Dr. Miller.

DR. JOHN PETTS, who resided in this town for many years, was a physician, but he did not engage in practice after he removed to Ashburnham.

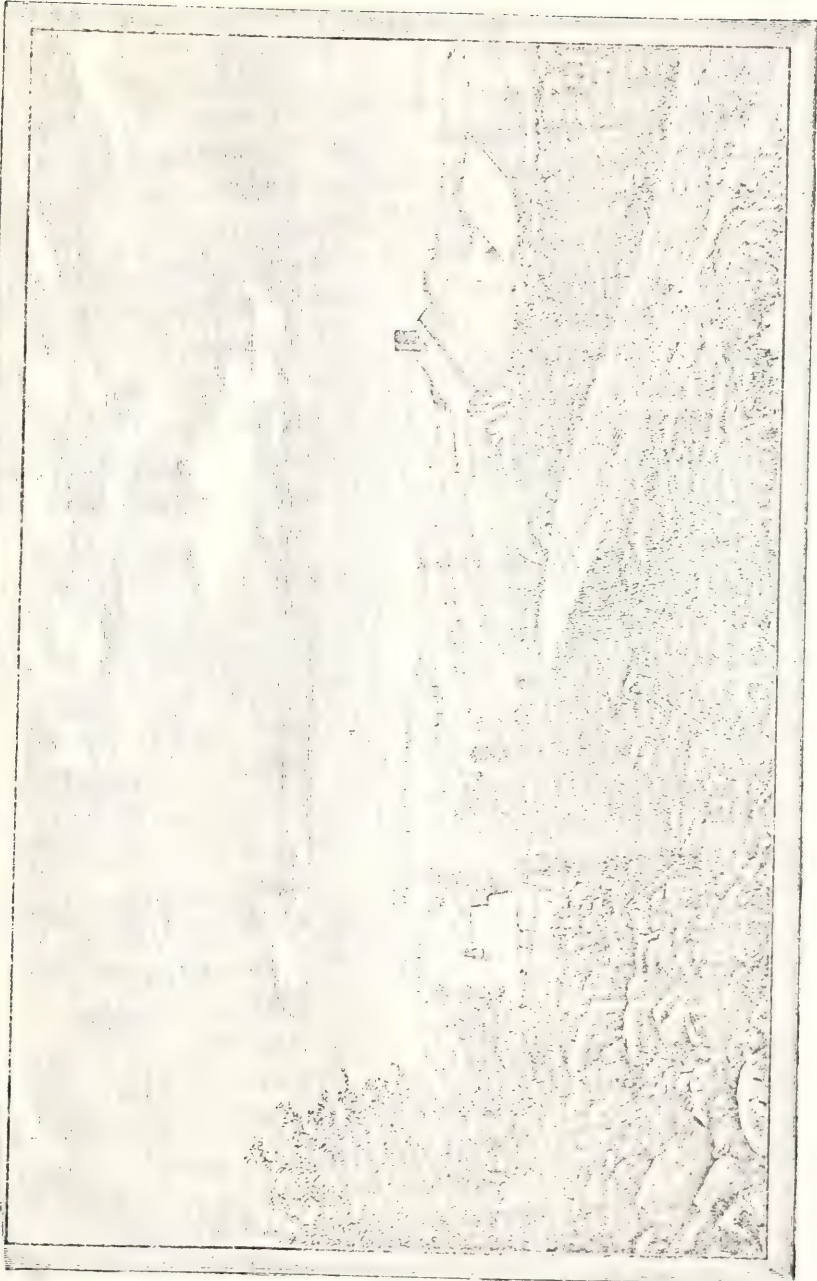
• **LAWYERS.**—Of the four resident lawyers of this town only one remained any considerable length of time. If the good people of Ashburnham have not been wholly free from





NAUKEAG LAKE FROM PACKARD'S HILL.





LANDSCAPE ROW FROM MEETING HOUSE HILL.



strife and contention, they have seldom appealed to the courts for arbitration. And in some instances it is possible the contestants have found more entertainment in a continued prosecution of some domestic quarrel than could be realized in any possible terms of legal adjustment.

EPHRAIM MAY CUNNINGHAM, ESQ., practised law in this town from about 1818 to 1824. He removed to South Reading, now Wakefield. While in this town he boarded with the Jewetts, and by tradition he is furnished with the credentials of a good character and respectable abilities.

HENRY ADAMS, ESQ., came to this town in 1825, or early in 1826, and remained four or five years. He was a man of fair abilities and met with a reasonable measure of success.

GEORGE G. PARKER, ESQ., was born in Coventry, Connecticut, May 10, 1800, and was graduated at Yale in the class of 1828. He pursued his professional studies in the office of Myron Lawrence, Esq., of Belchertown, and began the practice of law in this town in 1831. He was quite deaf and labored under great embarrassment, yet he was successful and was highly esteemed by the profession and by his townsmen. He served two years in the supervision of the public schools and for many years he was a member of the board of selectmen. In 1840 and 1841 he ably represented the town in the Legislature. He died December 14, 1852.

ALBERT HAYNES ANDREWS, ESQ., son of Jeremiah and Abigail Anna (Haynes) Andrews, was born in Waltham, December 29, 1829. He attended the schools in Ashby and Fitchburg and the Academy at Westminster, and pursued his professional studies in the office of Judge Thornton K. Ware of Fitchburg. He was admitted to the Worcester county bar in 1856. With a view of entering upon the practice of law in the West, Mr. Andrews went to Chicago



and there becoming interested in the controversy attending the political situation of Kansas he raised a company of sixty men and hastened to the relief of the Free State party in this memorable conflict. Returning to the East he entered upon the practice of law in this town in the autumn of 1857. He was the fourth and last resident lawyer in Ashburnham.

While a resident of this town he was a member of the school committee and in 1860 and 1861 he represented this district in the Legislature, and was adjutant of the Ninth Regiment of Militia, then under command of Colonel Joseph P. Rice. In May, 1861, Mr. Andrews was commissioned a first lieutenant in the regular army and assigned to the Nineteenth Infantry. He continued in the service about nine years and during this time he was in fact a citizen of Ashburnham. For gallant and meritorious service at the battle of Shiloh he was breveted captain and at Stone River he won the brevet rank of major. In the autumn of 1863 Major Andrews was ordered North on recruiting service. After enlisting two hundred and sixty-five men he remained with his regiment in Tennessee and Georgia until the surrender of the Confederate army. Subsequently, Major Andrews was with his regiment in Arkansas and Louisiana until he resigned January 1, 1870. During this time he was commandant of military posts much of the time and was frequently assigned to important trusts.

During the past seventeen years Major Andrews has resided in Fitchburg, in Kansas and in San Francisco, California, and since November, 1879, he has been Inspector of Customs at Boston. In a life of diversified employment, Major Andrews has been faithful and efficient in the discharge of duty and has commanded the respect and confidence of his associates.



DEACON SAMUEL WILDER was born in Lancaster, May 7, 1739. He was a son of Colonel Caleb Wilder and a grandson of Judge Joseph Wilder. Colonel Caleb Wilder owned many acres of land in Dorchester Canada and was much employed in forwarding the settlement. His name frequently appears in the records of the proprietors, but he never resided in this town. Samuel Wilder settled here previous to 1765. At the first town meeting under the act of incorporation, March 25, 1765, he was chosen collector of the land tax. Before the close of the year he temporarily removed from the town and in November following Samuel Nichols was chosen in place of Mr. Wilder who was, as the record asserts, "out of the province." He soon returned and in 1767 he was a selectman and received other mention in the proceedings of the meetings. From this date he resided in Ashburnham continuously until his death. In early life he was a captain in the colonial militia, but he was never honored with the title after he was chosen a deacon. The records assert his popularity and the unlimited confidence of his townsmen. He was several years a member of the General Court; was the town clerk twenty-two years, a selectman fifteen years and an assessor twenty years. In addition to this extended service he was frequently chosen on important committees and in every emergency his service was invoked. For many years he was justice of the peace and in his time few legal papers were executed in this town which did not bear his familiar signature.

The advancement of Mr. Wilder was attended by no fortuitous circumstances. His honors were merited and his position among his townsmen was the voice of mature sentiment. If not brilliant, his qualities were solid, and if he did not win the applause of his fellow-men, he enjoyed in an unusual degree their trust and confidence. At fifty-nine years of age he died suddenly May 9, 1798, but he lived



until Joseph Jewett had been advanced to his assistance in town affairs. Leaving his mantle, like the prophet of old, upon the shoulders of his successor, he closed a record full of honor and unstained with an ignoble deed.

JOSEPH JEWETT, son of Edward and Sarah Jewett, was born in Stow, May 10, 1761. The family had previously resided in Concord, where some of the older children were born and subsequently removed to Bolton. Deacon Edward Jewett, a man of superior ability and a prominent citizen of Rindge, was an older brother. After serving in the Revolution, of which mention is made in another chapter, Joseph Jewett removed to this town in 1783. He was a merchant and a farmer and for many years the leading business man in the place; but in other employments he was even more intimately identified with the town's history. In this connection his record as a citizen, and the sterling qualities of his character demand more than a passing notice. At the age of twenty-two years he entered upon the scene of his future activity and immediately the town recognized the qualities of the man. The proof of his popularity and the measure of the confidence reposed in him are witnessed by the records. He was a member of the board of selectmen fifteen years, an assessor fifteen years, town clerk eighteen years and was ten times chosen to preside over the annual March meeting.

In the midst of these accumulating honors and responsibilities he was a member of the Legislature seven years and was frequently chosen to serve on committees and render other service to the town. But no numerical statement of his official service will fairly express the measure of confidence reposed in him, or the unanimity in which he was called to these posts of duty. In military affairs he evinced a lively interest. Tradition asserts he was the first captain of the Ashburnham Light Infantry. It is certain that he



commanded a company in this town as early as 1789 and was commissioned a captain of the independent company in this town, July 12, 1791, and the following year was promoted to major. He was lieutenant-colonel in 1795 and colonel of the regiment, to which the Ashburnham companies belonged, in 1796. For many years he was a justice of the peace and was frequently called upon to act in this capacity. A rear room in the store building was styled the court-room and there many official papers were executed and many minor suits were adjudicated.

In these outlines of a life work, if other evidence failed, there would remain the inference of capacity, honesty and a measure of urbanity through which his fellow-men clearly recognized these sterling qualities.

In civil affairs Joseph Jewett is the most conspicuous personage in the town's history. He was the oracle of his time and an autocrat among his townsmen, yet his ambition was limited and he wisely exercised authority when thrust upon him. The aged who remember Mr. Jewett are united in the testimony that he was a man of rigid integrity, -- that the distinguishing qualities of his mind were an intuitive perception and a sound judgment, and that he was kind and considerate to his fellow-men. He died May 3, 1846.

GENERAL IVERS JEWETT, a son of Colonel Joseph Jewett, was born in this town, May 7, 1788. His record as a merchant in his native town has been stated in another chapter. In 1827 he removed to Fitchburg and was interested in several manufacturing and other enterprises. Many of the business ventures which he forwarded with enthusiasm and supported with his money and credit were unfortunate for him and his friends. General Jewett was of buoyant, ardent temperament, of attractive, personal appearance and commanding presence. He was affable, kind-hearted and generous. Popularity was his birthright and the record of his



early life is attractive and inspiring. At thirty-four years of age he had risen from the ranks of the Ashburnham Light Infantry to the rank of a general of the State Militia. At every step in this rapid transition he had been an efficient and popular officer. He had been a successful merchant and had enlarged the business established by his father. He had been employed in town affairs and had exercised unusual sway and command among his fellow-men.

Few men at this age and in a rural community of limited population have made a more brilliant record. In mental capacity, in fitness to lead and ability to command among men and aptitude in the routine transaction of business, he resembled his father in an eminent degree. In boldness of conception, in power to persuade and in originality of project he was his superior; but in ripeness of judgment, in prudence and caution, he failed at the threshold of his father's success. Of his later life little is known. He removed to the South and there accumulated a handsome property which was swept away by the fortunes of war during the Rebellion. He died at Mobile, Alabama, April 26, 1871.

THE WILLARDS. — The brothers Deacon John and Jacob Willard removed from Harvard 1768. They were men of ability and occupied prominent positions in public affairs. Deacon Willard died July 4, 1793, having been in feeble health for several years. He was a man of most estimable character and was highly respected. Had he been sustained by health it is probable that very few in the history of the town would have been more conspicuous.

Jacob Willard was a strong, aggressive character. His services in behalf of good government during the disturbances succeeding the Revolution, and especially during the excitement attending the revolt of Daniel Shays, were instant and effective. He was a delegate to the Law and Order



Conventions held at that time, and was a firm supporter of the Government. He was a representative to the first Legislature convened under the Constitution of the State, and was four times elected subsequently. His name frequently appears in the list of town officers in another chapter, and few men have exercised a stronger or more salutary influence in town affairs. He died February 22, 1808.

SILAS WILLARD, ESQ., son of Deacon John Willard, was another prominent citizen of this town. In 1820 he was a member of the Constitutional Convention and was frequently chosen to positions of trust. For twenty-eight years he was a justice of the peace and through a long life he commanded the esteem and respect of all who knew him. He died June 14, 1855.

JOHN ADAMS, son of Captain Thomas and Lydia (Chadwick), Adams, was born, January 22, 1745. In 1766 he began a clearing on Cambridge farm, on land purchased of his father, and here he was engaged each summer in clearing land and in building a house and a barn until 1770, when he became a permanent resident of this town. That John Adams was a man of unusual vigor of body is an easy inference from the fact that he lived to the advanced age of one hundred and four years, one month and four days, and that he was a man of superior mental endowment is swiftly witnessed by the record of a prolonged and useful life. He was frequently elected assessor and selectman, and in other municipal affairs he was much employed. In an unusual degree he commanded the respect and good will of his townsmen. The fruit of a life of industry and frugality he distributed, while living, among his children, and when over ninety years of age, with a horse and light wagon, he journeyed to Harford, Susquehannah county, Pennsylvania, and back to Ashburnham. His son, James, had previously



removed to Harford and soon after his visit there he returned to that place and there resided until his death.

In the closing years of a remarkable life he passed through no twilight of mental decay and feebleness. When over one hundred years of age, in a letter to Mrs. Samuel Gibson, who during many years was a near neighbor, he writes of himself in these clear, intelligent sentences. — “My eyesight remains much as it has been for many years. I can see with glasses to read an hour or two at a time which answers in the room of hearing.” Not until he had closely approached one hundred years did his hearing fail, and to the end he was able to converse with his friends, although his hearing was considerably impaired. Under date of February 7, 1846, he writes to his grandson, John Adams, as follows :

*Beloved Grandson* : — This morning I received the kindness of your letter, and among other things it brought the sorrowful and melancholy tidings of the death of your venerable grandmother Gibson. The news has struck me with uncommon feelings of sorrow. I presume you are not unacquainted with the friendship that has for many long years subsisted between the old lady, your grandmother, and myself, and hope you will not wonder at my being overpowered. My mind is too much disturbed to be able to write. O, what a vale of tears is this pilgrimage, — this worldly state in which we are placed ! And how are we excited to sympathize with each other under the bereavements which we have sustained since I saw you last, when we look around and see what slaughter the King of Terrors has been permitted to make in our family. O, how many of our nearest relations and even bosom companions are no more ; — and last of all your beloved grandmother, my friend and sister. And where now shall we look for consolation ? To God and to the Gospel of his Son. There, and there alone, shall we find relief.

Love to your children and all enquiring friends, your uncle Samuel's [Gibson] family in particular. With the affections of a parent,

I remain

JOHN ADAMS.



In a letter to Joel Foster, son of Samuel and grandson of Jeremiah Foster, an early settler in this town, vivid evidences of an unimpaired memory are apparent. The letter was written at Harford, February 3, 1846.

*Respected Friend:*— I am now with a weak and faltering hand attempting to comply with your request by writing a few lines to you, hoping this will find you and your family in health and prospering. I would inform you that my health is as good as may be expected by a person like myself under the infirmities of old age and the decay of mental faculties. Dear sir, I received your friendly letter by my son James and took much pleasure in reading the contents of it; it always gives me much pleasure to receive a letter from my Massachusetts friends, but especially from a family where I have been so agreeably acquainted as I was with your honored father and his family. It reminds me of by-gone days when we were doing town business together. If ever I took satisfaction in that business it was when I was connected with your father. True, he was not a ready writer; but his candor, his judicious and sound judgment and unprejudiced mind and extensive knowledge of the town and its affairs, qualified him for the business in which he was often engaged. I presume you remember me often at your house, and I knew something of its affairs; and truly I thought your father and his family was a worthy example, and on his farm a pattern of industry, diligence and economy; in the town, a pillar to the community a blessing to all, an honest man, which is the noblest work of God. But his God whom he served saw fit in the midst of his days to call him hence, and shall not the Lord of heaven and earth do right? And who shall say to the Almighty, what doest thou, or why doest thou so?

I understand by your letters that in years past you have been visited by sickness and the loss of friends, even your bosom friend. In this I can feelingly sympathize with you, having been tried in the same furnace of affliction, losing the wife of my youth with whom I lived fifty-three years, every year adding strength to the tie of affection. But under these trials it becomes us to cultivate



a spirit of resignation whereby we may be enabled to say from the heart, — “Not my will, heavenly Father, but thine be done.”

Dear friend, I now take the liberty to congratulate you on the happy connexion which you have formed with the once Mrs. Cobleigh, a lady with whom I have in time past had some acquaintance, and view her to be a lady of virtue, intelligence and beneficence, and with whom I wish you to enjoy a long, peaceful, joyful, prosperous and happy life.

I must write one sad piece of news, if you have not heard of it. Our coal mine, about eighteen miles from here, about a fortnight ago broke in and covered seventeen men which have not yet been found.

Give my respects to all your surviving family and enquiring friends. When I think of Ashburnham, it seems as though I was at home, being the place where I spent the prime and vigor of my days, and where there are now many of my near relations and dear friends sleeping in the dust. Peace to their ashes; and peace to the town; long may it continue to prosper; and may truth and righteousness grow and flourish.

Divine Providence, it seems, has so ordered that my body must return to dust in a strange land, that is, in a land far distant from where rest most of the ashes of my beloved relatives. Truly such would not have been my choice; but why should we be anxious about the clay when the spirit has taken its flight to God who gave it? And blessed be God for the hope which is the anchor of the soul sure and steadfast, that we in his own time shall meet and worship him and his son Jesus Christ our Redeemer, joining in a new and never-ending anthem and song of redeeming love.

And here, dear sir, I must conclude my broken epistle; and bidding you goodby, I remain your sincere friend,

JOHN ADAMS, aged one hundred and one years.

MR. JOEL FOSTER.

Other letters and writings, treasured by his descendants, assert the vigor of an active mind, and those written when this aged man had lived an hundred years are without a





*Jerome W. Foster.*



parallel. He died February 26, 1849. His descendants in this town have been and still are numerous and have ever been useful and prominent citizens.

COLONEL ENOCH WHITMORE, son of Isaac and Rebecca (Foster) Whitmore, was born in this town, September 8, 1796. He was a farmer and a manufacturer, and resided in the northwest part of the town. In early life he was an efficient officer in the militia and rapidly rose to the command of the regiment. Having held the commissions of lower rank he was commissioned colonel of the Fourth Regiment in 1829. In town affairs he was frequently called to positions of trust and was chosen to nearly all the offices within the gift of the town.

The anti-slavery cause early enlisted his sympathies and found in him an intelligent and steadfast support. With him the sentiment was not the offspring of emotional sympathy, but a living principle of human right and justice. In this and in all questions of moment, Colonel Whitmore was a radical but not a fanatic. In his view the institution of slavery was wrong, and to oppose it with the force of a persistent nature was a natural sequence. For many years he was in the minority and during an age of strong political prejudices, his political views were a bar to promotion in public service; yet his frequent election to office was a spontaneous recognition of his worth and ability. In his daily life he was above reproach, and in his social relations he was generous and affectionate. He died September 13, 1860.

JEROME W. FOSTER, Esq., son of Joel and Dolly (Wetherbee) Foster, was born in this town, December 15, 1810. He was a great-grandson of Jeremiah Foster, one of the early settlers of this town, and inherited in an eminent degree a firmness of character and soundness of judgment which had distinguished his ancestors. Mr. Foster was a



man of varied employments and many trusts were safely confided to his efficient management. He was a civil engineer, a justice of the peace, for many years the superintendent of the post office and was frequently employed in the conduct of town affairs. He was also a trustee of Cushing Academy and a member of the committee of construction, and to his prudent and sagacious counsels the Academy is much indebted. For eighteen years he was town clerk. The records by him transcribed are expressed with precision and orderly arrangement. In every labor of an industrious life, Mr. Foster has left the impress of mature judgment and integrity of character. If he never sought the applause of his fellow-men and never suggested his own advancement he did not fail to receive the spontaneous confidence and unqualified respect of all who knew him.

Mr. Foster was reserved in manner and conservative in his habits of thought, yet he never failed in the discharge of important trusts, nor in courage to maintain his convictions of right and duty. He was prominent in all measures pertaining to the welfare of the town and on questions of moment his advice was frequently sought, and in his loyal service the best interests of the community were encouraged and advanced. He died March 23, 1871.

HON. OHIO WHITNEY, son of Ohio and Mary (Bolton) Whitney, was born in Ashburnham, June 9, 1813. He was honorably connected in direct and collateral branches of his family. In early life he was an apprentice with Josiah White, a carpenter of this town, and subsequently he was foreman with Mr. Tower of Worcester, a few years. Returning to his native town at the age of twenty-six years, he was mainly employed as a contractor and builder through the earlier years of an active and useful life. He was engaged at different times in many business





*Chio Whitney Jr*



enterprises, and especially those in which the prosperity of the town was more immediately involved. But he was best known and is more conspicuous in the annals of this town as a public-spirited, loyal citizen. With him the fame and growth of Ashburnham was not merely a series of sudden impulses, enlisting his energies for a day, but rather a controlling and ever renewed inspiration which neither failed under discouragement nor suffered abatement under opposing obstacles.

Every commendable enterprise has found in Mr. Whitney unfailing encouragement and to the aid of very many his willing service has been summoned. For many years he was a trustee of the Fitchburg Savings Bank and a vice-president of the Ashburnham Savings Bank, and an original director of the Ashburnham National Bank. He was president of the Worcester North Agricultural Society in 1864 and 1865, and an active member of the Fitchburg Board of Trade. His efficient service in behalf of Cushing Academy, is mentioned in another chapter.

In the affairs of the town he was much employed. His service in this direction was efficient and cheerfully rendered. Eighteen years he presided over the annual March meetings and was frequently elected to the board of selectmen and assessors and upon important committees. In 1856 he represented the town in the House of Representatives, and the following year he was a member of the Senate.

But such enumeration of public services fails to suggest the characteristics of the man. In this direction others have earned equal honors, but few have served the public with equal acceptance and efficiency. In his intercourse with his fellow-men he was affable and charitable. He bore malice to none. In the inner walks of his daily life his affections were constant and his friendships enduring. He died February 6, 1879.



PERSONAL NOTICES. — To the following notices are appended brief sketches of Governor Isaac Hill, Thomas Parkman Cushing and Hon. Milton Whitney. While they removed from this town in early life they were members of Ashburnham families; Mr. Cushing and Mr. Whitney were natives of this town.

HON. ISAAC HILL, eldest son of Isaac and Hannah (Russell) Hill, was born in Cambridge, now Arlington, April 6, 1788. The family removed to Ashburnham in 1798 and here found many ties of kindred. The mother of this distinguished man was a grand-daughter of Captain Thomas Adams who removed to this town in 1775 and a sister of Thomas Russell who removed here about 1790. The parents continued to live and died in this town, and three of the daughters became the wives of Ashburnham men. Assisting in the management of a farm and attending the primitive schools of this town a few weeks in each year, Mr. Hill remained here until December, 1802, when he was apprenticed to Joseph Cushing, the publisher of the *Farmers' Cabinet* at Amherst, New Hampshire. Mr. Cushing was a son of Captain David Cushing of this town.

Having improved every opportunity for the acquisition of knowledge, he left the employ of Mr. Cushing and went to Concord, New Hampshire, April 5, 1809, the day before he was twenty-one years of age. In the autumn preceding the *American Patriot*, a small weekly paper, had been established in Concord and at this time Mr. Hill purchased the establishment. On the eighteenth of April he became a citizen of Concord and entered upon a career enlivened by many weighty and brilliant achievements. He was an able controversial writer and for many years the vigorous editor of the *New Hampshire Patriot*. Through the columns of this paper he won a national reputation and became the



acknowledged leader of the Democratic party of the State. He was a rigid partisan, ready at all times to give and to receive vigorous blows; and if he was strong and sometimes scathing in attack he was generous and noble in all his personal relations with his fellow-men. His friendship was unfailing, he was frank, sincere and honest and his character was above reproach. It is easily within the limits of conservative estimate to assert that Isaac Hill had a more numerous personal following and firmer adherents than has fallen to the lot of any man in New Hampshire.

In the course of an active life he was called to numerous positions of trust and responsibility and in this varied service his integrity and ability were conspicuous. He was a director of several local monetary organizations; twice the clerk of the State Senate, a member of both branches of the Legislature and in 1829 he was appointed by President Jackson second comptroller of the Treasury Department. He was chosen United States senator for a full term commencing March, 1831. Having been elected governor of New Hampshire in the spring of 1836 he resigned his seat in the Senate a few months before the completion of the term. In 1837 and 1838 he was reelected governor, and in 1840 he was appointed sub-treasurer of the United States at Boston.

THOMAS PARKMAN CUSHING was born in this town, October 7, 1787. He was the youngest of the eight children of Rev. Dr. John and Sarah (Parkman) Cushing. In lineal descent this family is not represented in this town at the present time, but the name is crystallized in the annals of Ashburnham. It will live for ages and will be read in fair characters, both in the prolonged and useful pastorate of the father and in the life and benevolence of the son. At the age of thirteen years he entered the store of an elder brother in Boston. This engagement was interrupted by the death



of his brother. In 1809 he became one of the firm of Tuckerman and Rogers, subsequently known as Tuckerman and Cushing and as Cushing and Wilkinson. In this firm he was actively engaged until he retired from business a few years previous to his death.

In an address delivered by Rev. Josiah D. Crosby at the dedication of Cushing Academy, 1875, appears the following outline of the business life of Mr. Cushing.

"The knowledge, varied, extensive and valuable, necessary to conduct such establishments successfully, is almost an education of itself. Besides, the habits of the man of business in respect to order, punctuality, observation, large generalization of facts, of close and consecutive thinking, of decisive and instant action, conjoined with honorable dealing, are of high value.

"Not unfrequently men, so trained, have stepped into the highest offices of the country, and have filled them with great profit to the people, as well as honor to themselves. Mr. Cushing seems to have applied himself with a characteristic enthusiasm to a thorough mastery of all the knowledge connected with his business, and much more than this, as will appear farther on. He went abroad for business purposes early in life, and made good use of his opportunities for general improvement. But all this was incidental to his main purpose, that is, success in business. About 1812, he formed the purpose of going to Europe to purchase goods to be put upon a bare market after the war. He was defeated in his first attempt, but finally reached England through Halifax. He remained in Europe to the close of the war. He bought his goods, and they came upon the market at a favorable time, with much advantage to himself from his venture.



"Mr. Cushing was an upright and honorable merchant of the old school. He guided his conduct by principles, and not impulses. His gains were not from speculation, dash or reckless movements, but were the results of fair trade. His morals were pure and his habits good. Though a man of great energy and persistency, yet he was a quiet, noiseless man, especially pleased with home and domestic scenes. His relief from toils of business was not in the gatherings of men, but in reading, many times till late at night. It may suffice to say, that by good conduct, untiring industry and excellent judgment, he gained for himself an ample fortune in the sense of his time, and achieved a place among the solid men of Boston."

In his youth the exterior educational advantages of Mr. Cushing were limited, but the influences of his home in childhood gave direction to his habits of thought and his manner of life. He was a student always and with an exacting employment of his leisure hours he became a master of English literature and acquired a fair knowledge of French and Spanish.

By attentive reading, by observation and through the association with persons of similar tastes, Mr. Cushing fully comprehended the enlargement of education and the progress of art and the sciences that have attended the age in which he lived. In these habits of thought and in such employments, stimulated by a thirst for knowledge which his early advantages could not satisfy, the foundations of Cushing Academy were wisely and firmly laid.

Concerning his manner in his daily life the affectionate hand of a daughter has written :

"My father had a remarkably even temper, and rarely gave way to anything like excitement in tone or look. He had a quick sense of humor and enjoyed telling and hearing



a good story. His manners were ever those of a highly bred gentleman, his voice naturally low, and uniform urbanity and courtesy distinguished him in his family as abroad. He had a fine musical ear; in younger days was a good singer and played the flute well. Even to the last year of his life, it was a delight to him to accompany the piano with his favorite instrument, and our evenings were often spent in music and singing.

"He was also fond of art, and though never in Italy, was familiar with her treasures of sculpture, architecture and painting, and possessed many fine engravings of the same."

Thomas Parkman Cushing died November 23, 1854. His will which had been written a few years, making ample provision for an institution of learning in his native town, was then announced. The wisdom and the liberality of the bequest have received willing tributes of commendation, but no one can present a clearer picture of the man or give a better interpretation of his thought than are revealed in the pages of his will.

MILTON WHITNEY, Esq., son of Captain Silas and Hannah (Cushing) Whitney, was born in this town, October 9, 1823. In an exact use of an ambiguous term, Mr. Whitney was a self-educated man. His only educational privileges were found in the public schools in this town and at a time before high schools and academies presented an opportunity for an advanced course of study. At an early age he entered the law office of Torrey and Woods, Esqs., of Fitchburg. He was an attentive student and was admitted to the Worcester county bar about 1845. After a brief practice in Fitchburg, he removed to Baltimore, Maryland, in 1850. There, as if awaiting his arrival, the laurels of conquest abundantly crowned his industry and earnest efforts. His ability as a lawyer and his power as an



advocate were promptly recognized, and he early secured a large and lucrative practice. In 1854 he was chosen county attorney for the county of Baltimore, and at the completion of his term in 1858, he was reelected. In the conduct of this office, he manifested both ability and courage. He instituted a fearless and vigorous prosecution of a disorderly element of the population, and liberated the city from a reign of terror which had prevailed for many years. With unrelenting energy he brought men of high and low degree to feel the power of offended law, and gave to human life and property a security unknown in former years. In this direction his success was brilliant and substantial. Often he labored in the midst of an adverse public sentiment and wrested a verdict against crime from a sympathizing jury.

In 1860 he resigned an office in which for six years he had won unusual distinction and had secured the merited regard of his fellow-men. During the remaining years of his life he conducted many trials that are historic in that State.

The national government recognizing his ability, confided to his care several important cases. In one of these he secured a verdict of three million dollars on a claim of the Post Office Department against a delinquent contractor. This successful issue attracted considerable attention from the fact that the defendants had successfully resisted all former proceedings against them. But he was best known and won the highest distinction as a criminal lawyer. With the training he had received as a prosecuting attorney, with an intimate knowledge of criminal law and the ability to summon every energy for instant use he was as successful in defence as he had formerly been in the prosecution of persons accused of crime. He was frequently brought into competition with men of the highest legal attainments and ability as advocates, but on all occasions he sustained



himself with credit and honor. His intellect brightened in the contest and each encounter added to his fame.

In the midst of his greatest achievements his strength failed him and he sought his native town for rest and in the hope of amended health. Surrounded by friends and visited by the acquaintances of his youth, his courage triumphed over his weakness, yet he found no relief and lived only a few weeks.

Mr. Whitney was of medium height and of slender form. Sudden and nervous in his movements, he was yet affable and inviting in his manner. In his clear blue eye beamed the light of restless force and the tone of his voice gave accurate expression to the ardor of his emotions. Modest and unassuming, he seldom referred to his achievements or appeared conscious of the magnitude of his labor. He died in Ashburnham, September 3, 1875, and was buried in Baltimore, Maryland.

COLLEGE GRADUATES.—The following list of college graduates both in number and ability is highly creditable to the town. All of them are either natives of Ashburnham or removed hither in early childhood. A few are included who did not graduate, although they substantially completed a collegiate course of study.

ASA STEARNS, son of William and Lydia (Davis) Stearns, was born in Ashburnham, October 14, 1784. Graduated at Harvard University, 1807. He was a young man of promise. His early death is recorded by Rev. John Cushing:—Asa Stearns, A. B., a candidate for the gospel ministry, died December 19, 1809, *Æ.* 25.”

REV. OLIVER GREEN, son of Oliver and Dorothy Hildreth Green, was born in Pepperell, July 4, 1781. Oliver Green, Sen., was a native of Pepperell and resided there until about 1782 when he removed to Ashby. The year 1799 he



resided in Westford, and in 1800 he removed to this town where he died May 15, 1834. Oliver, the son, was nineteen years of age when the family removed to Ashburnham. He graduated at Dartmouth College, 1807, and studied divinity with Rev. Dr. Samuel Austin, of Worcester. He taught at New Salem from June, 1807, to October 1808, and at Saratoga Springs, New York, from October, 1808, to September, 1809. In the autumn of the last year he removed to Sparta, New Jersey, where he was pastor of the Presbyterian church and a teacher. He died at Sparta, October 24, 1810.

DR. SAMUEL SCOLLAY, son of Grover and Rebecca (Harris) Scollay, was born in Harvard, January 21, 1781. The family removed to Ashburnham when he was a child of three or four years of age. He fully improved the public schools of this town and labored upon the farm of his father until he became of age and was at full liberty to direct his future course. He then pursued a liberal course of study and was graduated at Harvard University, 1808. After teaching a short time, he studied medicine with Dr. Samuel J. Cramer, of Charlestown, Virginia, and in the spring of 1816, he received his degree from the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. He entered upon the practice of his profession in Smithfield, Jefferson county, Virginia, now West Virginia, and there remained in active labor until his death. He was a man of superior ability, and in his profession he merited and enjoyed an excellent reputation. He acquired a substantial estate, but the memory of his spotless character and excellent qualities of mind and heart was the richer inheritance of his children. He died January 11, 1857.

REV. JONATHAN DAVID WINCHESTER, son of Henry and Lois (Phelps) Winchester, and a grandson of Rev. Jonathan



Winchester, was born in Ashburnham, April 28, 1781. Graduated at Middlebury College, 1809. He read theology with Rev. Holland Weeks, of Abington. After preaching a few years at Madrid, New York, he was pastor of the First Presbyterian church in Madison, Ohio, from 1826 to 1828, and of the Second Presbyterian church in that place 1830-31. He was a noted biblical student and devoted considerable time to a critical study, but a literal interpretation of the prophecies concerning the restoration of the Jews. He believed in their early return to Jerusalem with their Mosaic rights and ceremonies and that their conversion to Christianity would immediately follow. Until his death he labored assiduously to direct the attention of the Christian public to this subject, and also to convince the Jews of the general truths of Christianity. Imbued with these sentiments and improving every opportunity to give them expression, he travelled extensively in this country and also visited England where he was engaged several months in active labor. With a lofty faith and courage unabated, he was contemplating a journey to the shores of the Mediterranean, in a hope that he might render more signal service in preparing a way for the return of Israel to their ancient Jerusalem, when death overtook him. He died at Madison, Ohio, August 17, 1835.

HENRY CROSBY, son of Frederick and Martha (Maynard) Crosby, was born in Shrewsbury, July 18, 1785. The family removed to this town 1795. He graduated at Dartmouth College, 1810, and read for the profession of law in the State of New York, where he practiced several years. Subsequently, he removed to Middlebrook Mills, Montgomery county, Maryland, where he was engaged in teaching many years. About 1838, it is supposed, he removed to Missouri and his subsequent career is unknown.



ASA GREEN, M. D., son of Oliver and Dorothy (Hildreth) Green, was born in Ashby, February 11, 1789. He entered sophomore class of Williams College and graduated 1813. In college he held a good reputation as a scholar and was distinguished for wit and vigor of thought. He practised medicine in Lunenburg, Townsend and North Adams, and while residing in the last named place he conducted a paper for a short time. Later, he removed to New York city and published a readable work of fiction which was intended to ridicule quackery in medicine. He received his degree of Doctor of Medicine from Brown University. He died in New York, 1839.

HON. PHINEHAS RANDALL, son of Phinehas and Sarah (Crosby) Randall, was born in Ashburnham, June 5, 1787. About 1810 the family removed to Williston, Vermont, and while a resident of that place he entered the University of Vermont where he graduated in the class of 1813. He was principal of the academy in Cherry Valley, New York, for a short time and was early admitted to the bar. He was successfully engaged in the practice of his profession at Bowman's Creek, later known as Ames, in Montgomery county, New York, until 1851, when he removed to Waukesha, Wisconsin, where he died 1853.

In 1828-9, he was a member of the New York Legislature and was appointed Judge of the Court of Common Pleas for the county of Montgomery 1839. Among his children are included Hon. Alexander W. Randall, governor of Wisconsin, and Hon. Edwin M. Randall, Chief Justice of Florida. The family record is continued in the Genealogical Register.

REV. JOHN STEARNS, son of Isaac and Mary (Crosby) Stearns, was born in this town, May 11, 1791. Graduated at Union College, 1821. He studied divinity and was ordained in the ministry without charge. He was a teacher



in Washington, D. C., where he died September 10, 1824.

REV. MERRICK AUGUSTUS JEWETT, D. D., youngest son of Colonel Joseph and Sarah (Woods) Jewett, was born in this town, August 26, 1798. He is remembered as a youth of excellent qualities of mind and heart, and was held in high esteem as a pupil and subsequently as a teacher in the public schools of his native town. He pursued his preparatory studies at Phillips Academy, Andover, and graduated at Dartmouth College in class of 1823. During the ensuing two or three years he assisted in the store of an elder brother who was established in Baltimore, Maryland, and while there he studied theology under the direction of Rev. Dr. John McKim Duncan. After preaching nearly eight years in Bedford county, Pennsylvania, in the summer of 1834, while journeying to St. Louis where a field of labor was inviting him, he tarried for a day at Terre Haute, Indiana. The labor of a lifetime now met him on his way. He was cordially invited to remain and preach the ensuing Sabbath. The first sermon determined the future relations between the preacher and the settlement. Terre Haute, now a city of thirty-five thousand inhabitants, was then a village of twelve hundred. At their earnest solicitation Mr. Jewett remained and preached to them through the week, and early in December, 1834, a Congregational church was organized with eleven members. With an ardent, eloquent preacher and a respected and beloved pastor, the church grew with the town. In 1841, during a series of revival meetings, Mr. Jewett was assisted by Rev. Henry Ward Beecher and over one hundred names were added to the roll of the church.

An incident connected with his early labors in Terre Haute was never forgotten by the pastor or his sympathizing flock. After he had preached a few weeks he returned to



Baltimore to attend his family on the journey to their future home. Returning they arrived at Terre Haute Christmas eve. The following morning his little son was instantly killed by the accidental discharge of a gun in the hands of a servant. If his labors were begun with tears, the sorrowful event awoke the tender sympathy of his people.

In 1860, and after a successful and able pastorate of nearly twenty-six years, Mr. Jewett resigned his charge. Without charge, though frequently engaged in religious labor, he continued a residence in that place until a few months preceding his death. While journeying in the South for the benefit of impaired health he died at Paris, Texas, April 3, 1874, aged nearly seventy-six.

In regard to the ministry of Rev. Dr. Jewett, one who knew him through all the years of his devoted labor in Terre Haute, pays him a cheerful tribute: "He was a man of great ability, bearing a high reputation as a pulpit orator and as a faithful, sympathetic pastor." "Added to his social qualities and to his strong sympathy and to his broad catholicity were his superior talents. He was an earnest preacher of the truth. He was a man of thought, a man of culture."

REV. JOSIAH DAVIS CROSBY, Union College, 1826.  
*Vide* Chapter VIII.

REV. JESSE GEORGE DAVIS STEARNS, son of Jesse and Lucinda (Davis) Stearns, was born in this town, February 24, 1812. The family removed to New Ipswich in 1829 where he pursued his preparatory studies and graduated at Amherst College, 1836. He was principal of Hopkins Academy in Hadley 1836-8, and tutor in Amherst College 1839-41. Mr. Stearns pursued a full course of theological study at Andover, 1838-9 and '41-2. He was ordained at Billerica, the home of his ancestors, May 29, 1843, and was



dismissed May 8, 1867. He was subsequently acting pastor at Zumbrota, Minnesota, from 1876 until his death which occurred November 1, 1882.

Of his pastorate in Billerica, Rev. Henry A. Hazen accords the following merited tribute: "The long and faithful pastorate of Mr. Stearns deserves especial recognition. A scholar of exceptional diligence and culture, modest and devout and active in every good word and work, he commended himself to the citizens of the town as well as to his own charge. As a teacher of a useful private school and superintendent of the schools of the town, he exerted no little influence and represented the town in the Legislature." Mr. Stearns is the author of "Meaning and Power of Baptism," and of several printed discourses and pamphlets.

REV. WILLIAM RAYMOND, son of Daniel and Sally (Green) Raymond, was born in Ashby, October 27, 1815. The family removed to this town in 1822. He entered Amherst College in 1834 and remained two years. Subsequently he was an academical and theological student at Oberlin College but did not graduate. Having been appointed to the Mendi Mission, Africa, under the auspices of the American Missionary Association he arrived with his wife at Freetown, Sierra Leone, January 15, 1842, after a passage of fifty days. During the voyage they experienced considerable sickness and buried their only child. They immediately returned to their native land, but again sailed for Africa, November 21, 1843. In this service he died in Africa, November 26, 1847.

REV. WILLIAM SAFFORD SPAULDING, son of Isaac and Lydia (Brown) Spaulding, was born in this town, March 4, 1809. He was a student at New Ipswich Academy and graduated at Marietta College 1839. He was principal of an academy in East Brooklyn, New York, 1841-2; of Brooklyn



Female Collegiate Institute 1843-4; of Salisbury, New Hampshire, Academy, 1845-6; of Boscawen, New Hampshire Academy, 1847-8. While residing in Salisbury he studied divinity with Rev. C. B. Tracey and was ordained in the ministry September 18, 1848. During the succeeding ten years he was engaged in teaching and in the ministry in Ohio. Commencing in 1859 he was two years acting pastor of the Congregational church in Bristol, New Hampshire, and agent of the American Tract Society from 1867 to 1870. He died in Lynn, June 10, 1884.

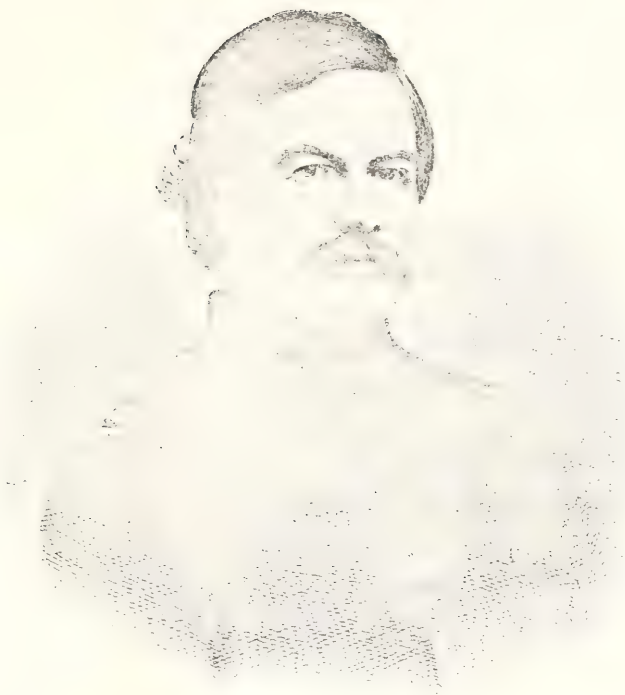
GENERAL HARRISON C. HOBART, a distinguished lawyer and politician of Wisconsin, was born in this town, January 31, 1815. He was a son of Peter and Keziah (Hobart) Hunt and at the solicitation of his maternal relatives he assumed the name of Hobart. In his youth he served an apprenticeship of three years in a printing-office at Haverhill, New Hampshire. Through his own efforts at his trade and in teaching school he pursued a liberal course of study graduating at Dartmouth College 1842. He studied law in the office of Hon. Robert Rantoul of Boston and emigrated to the Territory of Wisconsin in 1846. Mr. Hobart entered upon the practice of his profession in Sheboygan. His talents and sterling qualities commanded immediate recognition and on the year of his arrival he was chosen to the territorial legislature from Sheboygan and Washington counties. On the organization of the State government he was the first senator from his district. In this service he was appointed chairman of the Committee on Judiciary, a most important position, and many of the early statutes of the State were drafted by him. The following year he was returned to the Assembly and was elected Speaker of the House. In the years immediately following he was twice nominated for Congress and commanded the full support of his political party which was in the minority in his district.



In 1855 he removed to Chilton in Camulet county and from that district he was elected to the Assembly in 1859. The following year he was the standard bearer of the Democratic party in the gubernatorial contest. In this canvass the town of Ashburnham was exclusively and honorably represented, the Republican and successful candidate being Hon. Alexander W. Randall whose father was a native of this town.

During these years, crowned with many and substantial honors, Mr. Hobart has been a successful lawyer and has been thoroughly identified with the prosperity of a vigorous State and the welfare of its public institutions. At the first call for troops in the Spring of 1861 he closed his office and enlisted as a private. In the organization of the Fourth Wisconsin Regiment he was commissioned captain. Having been stationed several months near Washington, in March, 1862, the regiment was ordered to New Orleans under command of General Butler. In this campaign the regiment rendered gallant service. Captain Hobart, then at Baton Rouge, was promoted August 21, 1862, to lieutenant-colonel of the Twenty-first Wisconsin Regiment. Colonel Hobart joined his regiment in Kentucky in October. The colonel being absent on account of wounds, Colonel Hobart was in command of the regiment from the time of his arrival in Kentucky. At the battle of Stone River which ensued soon after, Colonel Hobart and his command received honorable mention in the report of General Rosseau. On the evening of the memorable battle at Chickamauga, General Thomas ordered a retreat; in this movement, Colonel Hobart who had been holding a forward position was taken prisoner. With many other Union prisoners he was incarcerated in Libby prison. At the end of four months he with many others escaped through a tunnel which they had excavated under the street and a distance of sixty feet. He returned to





W C Hobart



his regiment and participated in the siege of Atlanta, Georgia, and in the "March to the Sea." In the closing scenes of the war he was in command of a brigade. At the request of General Sherman and dating from the capture of Atlanta, he was brevetted brigadier-general for meritorious service. On his return to civil life in 1865 General Hobart removed to Milwaukee and there renewed the practice of his profession. In 1865 he was again a candidate for governor and was defeated by Hon. Lucius Fairchild on party issues. Two years later finds him again in the Assembly where his service was conspicuous. Through several succeeding years he was a member of the city council and in 1878 its president.

His career has been brilliant and honorable. As a lawyer, an orator, a legislator and a soldier, he has won many laurels and has secured the confidence and respect of his fellow-men.

REV. JOSIAH MILTON STEARNS, son of Jesse and Lucinda (Davis) Stearns, was born in this town, June 17, 1818. He fitted for college at New Ipswich Academy and entered Amherst College in class of 1843 but graduated at Marshall College, Pennsylvania, in class of 1844. He studied theology at Cincinnati, Ohio, and was ordained over the Congregational church at Lunenburg, Vermont, June 6, 1849. From his first charge he was dismissed February 3, 1852. After a brief pastorate at Brentwood, New Hampshire, he died in that town June 12, 1853.

REV. DANFORTH LEANDER EATON, son of Josiah and Mary (Reed) Eaton, was born, July 4, 1822. Entering Oberlin College he graduated in regular course 1843 and remained in the theological department of that institution the ensuing two years. During a prolonged and active career he has been a successful preacher in Michigan. (All the places named in the following paragraphs are in that



State.) He was ordained in the ministry at Farmers Creek, March 1, 1848, and the same year he was installed over the Congregational church in Oakland, where he remained until 1856. Subsequently he labored four years at Howell and at Brighton. In 1860 he was installed over the Congregational church in Lowell. From 1862 to 1866 he was engaged in business but returned to the ministry and preached in several places in the vicinity and again in Lowell from 1874 to 1878. During the past eight years, with a home in Lowell, he has supplied in Ovid, Cannon and Cannonsburg.

Mr. Eaton has been a faithful pastor and an acceptable preacher. He has ever maintained friendly and intimate relations with his charge, and with rare executive ability he has been eminently successful in building up the churches over which he has presided.

PETER THATCHER HUNT, son of Peter and Hezekiah (Hobart) Hunt, was born in Ashburnham, September 9, 1819. He graduated at Dartmouth College, 1847. He taught at Lexington and at Louisville, Kentucky, and was principal of the Glasgow Academy in the place last named. In the mean time he studied law and was admitted to practice in Louisville. Removing to Iowa he entered upon a successful practice of his profession, but failing health led him to modify the matured plans of a life work. In quest of health he visited the Pacific coast where for several years he was familiar with a life among the mines and with Indian warfare. Later he removed to Washington Territory and was there engaged in teaching and in stock-raising. During the war he was active and influential in the Union cause and a leading member of the Legislature. In 1872 he removed to Denver, Colorado, where he continues to reside and is a useful and influential citizen.



DR. CHARLES EDSON DAVIS, son of Charles and Elvira (Buss) Davis, was born in this town, May 11, 1822. He entered Dartmouth College 1846, and remained through Freshman and Sophomore years. With impaired health he pursued his professional study with Dr. Harriman of Gardner and graduated at Dartmouth Medical School, 1852. He practised successfully in Greenwich, Hardwick and Ashby. He died in this town, June 8, 1863.

OLIVER DAVIS, son of Charles and Elvira (Buss) Davis, was born in this town, August 7, 1823. He entered Dartmouth College with his brother and graduated in class of 1850. He studied medicine with Dr. Alfred Hitchcock of Fitchburg, and later he was a student at Harvard Medical School. On account of failing health he returned to his home a few weeks before the completion of the prescribed course of study. With ample preparation and ability for a life of usefulness, he died March 1, 1853.

REV. WALTER RICE, son of Silas and Almira (Corey) Rice, was born in this town, December 25, 1836. He attended the public schools of his native town and of Ashby and in early life removed to Illinois. With a view to enter the ministry, he entered Beloit College, Wisconsin, where he graduated with honor in the class of 1862. He pursued the prescribed course of study at Newton Theological Institution and graduated 1865. In July of the same year he was ordained and installed over the church in West Acton. In 1868, he became acting pastor of the church in South Royalston. Commencing in April, 1874, he was a student, in special course, at Andover Theological Seminary, and subsequently was pastor of the church in Lunenburg. Since May, 1880, Mr. Rice has been pastor of the church in Brandon, Vermont. He is in the midst of a successful



career and every year is presenting the fruit which will attend the labor of a lifetime.

REV. FRANCIS JOEL FAIRBANKS, son of Emory and Eunice (Hayward) Fairbanks, was born in this town, September 8, 1835. During his preparatory studies he was a popular teacher in the public schools of this town, Lunenburg and Gardner and one term in the High school at Ashby. He entered Amherst College the last term of Freshman year and graduated in class of 1862. He pursued a course of theological study at the Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey, and Union Theological Seminary, New York city. Licensed to preach May, 1863, by the Worcester North Association. Having supplied at Westminster, Vermont, during vacations while at the seminary, he was installed over the church in that place August 31, 1864, and dismissed in May, 1871. From January 1, 1872, he was acting pastor two years of the church in Ayer and acting pastor of the church in Paxton from April 1, 1874, to September 1, 1877. Since the last date he has been acting pastor of the Congregational church in West Boylston. Mr. Fairbanks is an earnest laborer in his profession. With the force of a vigorous mind and a fixed purpose he has commanded the attention and respect of his charge. His warm sympathies have sought their confidence and love, and in his daily life his public instruction is continually renewed. He has delivered a number of discourses on miscellaneous subjects and is the author of the History of Westminster, Vermont.

JOSEPH WHITCOMB FAIRBANKS, PH. D., son of Emory and Eunice (Hayward) Fairbanks, was born in this town, March 26, 1841. He fitted for college at Williston Seminary, Easthampton, and graduated at Amherst College 1866. He was principal of the High School, South Hadley Falls,



1866-8; of Centre School, Norwalk, Connecticut, 1868-74; of Dix Street Grammar School, Worcester, 1874-5; of Worcester High School, 1875-8 and of Williston Seminary, Easthampton, 1878-84. During the past two years he has been private tutor at St. Paul, Minnesota. Mr. Fairbanks is a person of strong and massive frame, genial in manner and of commanding presence. Endowed with rare executive ability, combined with liberal culture and ripe scholarship, he is a popular and efficient instructor. The labor of his life has been attended with an unusual measure of success.

MELVIN O. ADAMS, ESQ., son of Joseph and Dolly Winship (Whitney) Adams, was born in Ashburnham, November 7, 1847. He pursued his preparatory studies in this town and at New Ipswich Appleton Academy and graduated with honors at Dartmouth College in the able class of 1871. He was sub-master of the Fitchburg High School 1871-2, and read law with Hon. Edward Avery of Boston, and Hon. Amasa Norcross of Fitchburg. He received the degree of Bachelor of Laws from Boston University 1874, and the same year he was admitted to the Suffolk county bar. Until the year 1876 he continued a legal residence in this town and was moderator of the annual March meeting 1874, '75 and '76. Mindful of the partiality and appreciative regard of his townsmen, he has responded to many invitations for addresses on miscellaneous subjects.

In his professional labors in Boston since 1874, he has been successful and has won a merited reputation for character and ability. Since 1876 he has been assistant district attorney for the district of Suffolk, and has probably been engaged in the trial of a greater number of cases than has fallen to the lot of any lawyer of his age in the State. In habit of thought he is quick and vigorous. In attack or defence his resources are at instant command, and all his



work is sustained by the weight of integrity and character. Mr. Adams is yet a young man, possessing ability and opportunity to complete a career which has been ably and firmly outlined.

DR. ERNEST P. MILLER, son of Dr. Alfred and Elsie L. (Kibling) Miller, was born in Ashburnham, January 4, 1851. He attended the public schools of this town and of Fitchburg, and graduated at Harvard University 1872, and at Harvard Medical School 1877. He immediately entered upon the practice of his profession in Fitchburg, and has been successfully employed. Since 1877, he has been Medical Examiner; in 1878 and 1883 he was elected City Physician and since 1884 he has been a member of the Board of Examining Surgeons for Pensions.

FREDERIC D. LANE, son of Samuel and Nancy H. (Eaton) Lane, was born in this town, July 4, 1849. He attended the public schools of Ashburnham and Appleton Academy at New Ipswich and graduated at Dartmouth College in class of 1878. He taught one year in the public schools of Ashby and this town and since December, 1879, he has been an instructor of mathematics and German in Cushing Academy.

FRANCIS W. LANE, son of Allen F. and Laura (Tyler) Lane, was born in this town, October 24, 1858. He pursued his studies in the public schools of his native town and at Cushing Academy, and graduated at Dartmouth College 1881. He has taught in Yonkers, New York, and in Washington, D. C. At the present time he is examiner of pensions in the Department of the Interior.

DR. HENRY E. CUSHING, son of Benjamin and Lois (Holbrook) Cushing, was born in this town, November 30, 1853. Pursued his preparatory studies at Westfield High School and graduated at Dartmouth College 1882. He



received his degree from the Chicago Medical College in March, 1884, where he had pursued a prescribed course of study. In April following he removed to Champion, Illinois, and is junior member of the firm of Howard & Cushing, physicians and surgeons.

WALTER HERBERT MARBLE, son of Warren and Mary L. (Wilker) Marble, was born in this town, September 13, 1858. He was a student in the public schools of this town and at Cushing Academy. He graduated at Dartmouth College in class of 1883. At present he is a student at the Chicago Medical College, where he will graduate in March, 1886.

In addition to the college graduates a considerable number from this town have been admitted to the learned professions. Some of them have been distinguished in their calling and none have failed to honor the town from whence they came and in which the early habits of life were formed.

REV. STEPHEN RANDALL, son of Stephen and Sarah (Fairbanks) Randall, was born in Stow, January 20, 1763. He was the eldest of ten children, seven of whom were born before the family removed to this town in 1780. He was married and resided in this town until about 1808. In 1795 he was dismissed at his request from the Congregational church in order that he might unite with the Methodists. He was a preacher in that denomination several years. He died in Sweden, New York, April 16, 1828.

REV. SAMUEL HARRIS, son of Deacon Jacob and Elizabeth (Winchester) Harris, and a grandson of Rev. Jonathan Winchester, was born in this town, August 18, 1774. He read theology with Rev. Dr. Seth Payson of Rindge, and with Rev. Samuel Worcester of Fitchburg, and was licensed to preach 1803. After preaching a short time at Alstead and New Boston, New Hampshire, he was ordained and



installed over the Congregational church in Windham, New Hampshire, October 9, 1805. In consequence of loss of voice, he was dismissed at his request in December, 1826. In 1830 and 1831 he preached in Dublin, New Hampshire, but his voice again failed and he returned to Windham, where he died September 5, 1848. He was a faithful pastor and a useful man, and was held in high esteem by all who knew him.

REV. ELIJAH WILLARD, son of Deacon John and Sarah (Willard) Willard, was born in this town, April 19, 1782. At nineteen years of age he entered the Methodist ministry and was then received into the New England Conference. For several years he was assigned to stations in New Hampshire, Vermont and Canada. Subsequently, he filled several pastorates in this State, but for many years he was retained in the Conference in superannuated relation. He was an attentive student of the Scriptures and eminently biblical in the matter and the language of his public instruction. It is the unanimous testimony of all who knew him, that he was a sincere, earnest preacher and a most worthy and exemplary man. He died at Saugus, September 5, 1852.

DR. ABEL WILDER, son of Samuel and Dorothy (Carter) Wilder, was born in this town, June 24, 1786. He was a man of marked ability, and for many years a distinguished citizen and eminent physician of Blackstone, where he was engaged in active practice from 1823 to 1864. A few weeks before his death he removed to New York where he died 1864.

SIMEON SANDERSON, Esq., son of Moses and Mary Proctor Sanderson, was born, September 24, 1790. After attending the public schools of this town and several terms at the academies in this vicinity, he read law with Mr. Dustan of Westminster, and entered upon the practice of

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